

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

CAROLS OF THE COAST

M. H. Nickerson.

Digitized by Google

Harvard College Library



BOUGHT WITH MONEY
RECEIVED FROM THE
SALE OF DUPLICATES

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CAROLS OF THE COAST:

A COLLECTION OF

SONGS, BALLADS AND LEGENDS,

ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED.

BY

M. H. NICKERSON.

"He touched the tender stops of various quills
With eager thought, warbling his Dorie lay."—MILTON.

HALIFAX:
NOVA SCOTIA PRINTING COMPANY.
1892.

Digitized by Google

Can 7397. 1.30

HARVARD COLLEGE
MAY 23 1919
LIBRARY

Duplicate money

ENTERED according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-two, by MOSES H. NICKERSON, at the Department of Agriculture.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

I DO not propose to introduce this little book with elaborate remarks on what I conceive to be its merits or defects. That task, I am quite willing to leave where it belongs, in more competent hands.

Neither shall I say anything of my hopes or fears concerning the treatment it may receive, should it ever rise to the dignity of formal criticism. The usual comment on that head, prefixed to works of this nature, is always insipid, often unnecessary and sometimes worse than useless.

Every writer of verse, who deems his performances worthy of public regard, is justly supposed to put into them his best effort. They go forth to speak for themselves, in such spirit and voice as he has been able to endow them with. If they are found, by a fair audience, hopelessly dull or insufferably harsh, no preliminary flourish in prose can rescue them from that limbo which yearly swallows an enormous mass of futile literature.

Let me observe, however, in justice both to myself and to those who may honor with perusal the following collection, that it was too hastily prepared for publication to be free from certain faults, which would have been avoided had circumstances permitted me to bestow more care upon it. The pieces it contains, many of them the productions of extreme youth, had long lain in forgotten

Digitized by Google

manuscript, without revision or the slightest attempt to improve them, till within a few days of their going to the press. This fact may explain, if not excuse, the more obvious imperfections. With ampler opportunity, there would have been a wiser selection, a better arrangement and perhaps less ruggedness of language. But if literary merit, even in its crudest state, is entirely lacking; then I shall not, like many others, lay the blame on adverse circumstances, but frankly admit that the highest advantages of leisure and learning—both of which were denied me—could not have availed to supply the deficiency.

CLARK'S HARBOR,
April 23rd, 1892.

THE AUTHOR.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Overture	1
A Fragment	2
From the Shore	5
Dark Hours	6
The Village Crœsus	7
At Philippi	8
Francesco to Bianca	10
To the Muses	11
The Mother-Speech	13
Speranza	14
The Storm	15
Song	16
To J. Atkinson	17
New Year's Morning, 1878	22
A Character	23
Major Bray	24
The Major's Monologue	25
The Garland	28
Farewell	29
To a Flatterer	30
A Mock-Monody	30
To J. Atkinson	31
A Recollection	34
Song	35
John the Soldier	36
A Joyless June	48
Loved and Lost	49
At Jericho	53
Death of Lovelace	56
Euthanasia	59
Bahamas	62
Justice	65
Invocation	66
Ode to Ignorance	67
To a Fastidious Maid	69

Digitized by Google

PAGE

Our Torquemada 70
The Two Monarchs 71
The Poetic Art 72
In Exile 77
Song 77
A Feast of Fat Things 78
Nova Scotia 79
Song 82
The Contrast 83
Chatterton's Picture 84
Reflections of Faust 85
A Roman Model 86
Ode to Pandora 89
Storm-Stanzas 90
To C. F. McWhorter 91
Lark-Song 95
To Harriet Beecher Stowe 96
Apathes 98
The Brook 99
The Field-Flower 100
November Song 100
A Modern Maxim 101
The Clyde 102
Epitaph on Capt. Potter 103
Wherefore? 103
The Pachyderms 103
Song 104
Parting 105
Disappointment 105

SONNETS:

The True Poet 107
Francesco Petrarca 108
Twenty-Five 108
To the Servians, 1877 109
Aspiration 109
L. Amore È L'amicizia 110
Love and Friendship 110
To Capt. H. C. McWhorter 111
Francesco's Lost Love 112

Digitized by Google

SONNETS: PAGE
Midnight ... 112
Despair ... 113
Resignation ... 113
Santa Selva ... 114
The Dead Prince ... 114
To the City of Halifax ... 115
To Miss ——— ... 115
Grandezza ... 116
To a Young Lady ... 116
The Safest Guide ... 117
Carissima ... 117
Superstition ... 118
The Humbler Egotism ... 119
The Wish ... 125
Swan-Song of Timon ... 131
The Tyrant of Syracuse ... 135
Archilochus ... 140
Reconstruction ... 143
Nero II. ... 143
Sailing in Summer ... 146
My America ... 147
The Orator ... 148
Agariste ... 150
Nocturne ... 151
To Floarea ... 153
The Token ... 154
Response ... 155
The Faithless Floarea ... 156
Farewell to Floarea ... 157
The Holocaust ... 160
The Furies of the Feast ... 161
Troy Afloat ... 164
TRANSLATIONS:
Glory ... 175
The Dying Poet ... 178
The Hero's Battle-Prayer ... 180
Calumny ... 182
Woman ... 183
To Annie ... 184

Digitized by Google

TRANSLATIONS : PAGE
The Richest Ruler ... 185
The Wandering Jew ... 186
Genius ... 188
Happiness ... 190
The Ballad of the Bodensee ... 191
Spring Song ... 194
The Deserter's Friend ... 195
Cupid ... 196
Country Life ... 197
The Frightened Fawn ... 198
The Power of the Poets ... 199
Noel—An Ode ... 203
The Reversion ... 208
To Miss Hattie E. Homer ... 216
The Sea in Sunshine ... 218
Cupid's Career ... 219
Arion ... 228
The Clerical Quack ... 242
To Count Tolstoi ... 244
At Sea ... 249
Darwin ... 250
Sunrise ... 253
Oriental ... 254
John Burns, of London ... 257
The People First ... 259
The Doom of Romanoff ... 261
Giordano Bruno ... 265
To the Servians ... 269
Freedom ... 270
Folk-Song ... 273
New Year's Ode ... 274
To a Kindly Catechist ... 277
To Hon. W. S. Fielding ... 279
To Olive Schreiner, Capetown, Africa ... 280
To a Friend ... 281
The New Drama ... 282
Ad Populum ... 283
Stanzas to Mary ... 284
The Minstrel's Good-Night ... 285

Digitized by Google

ERRATA.

On page 201, the third line first stanza at top should be the second one. In the foot-note on same page, read "knock of a king," instead of "ring." Concluding line of first stanza at top of page 202 was intended for foot-note, referring to Skelton, in the text.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CAROLS OF THE COAST.

OVERTURE.

THESE are the sea-waifs gathered in my strolling
Along the sand-paved beach—
The duller shells of pearly clusters rolling
Beyond my depth and reach.

Oft have I watched them, from dark caves emerging,
Gleam brightly and depart;
While the wild waves through all my veins were surging,
And breaking at my heart.

I stood in pleasing peril, never pondering
The way my steps should go;
The glorious morn shone not to guide my wandering,
But to impart its glow.

To me no danger lurked within the ocean
That clasped the passive land,
With majesty in every sound and motion,
So free, so strong, so grand.

Digitized by Google

What radiant dreams since then have risen and faded
Into the mist of tears,
While the chill flood has ruthlessly invaded
The swiftly wasted years!

Yet the first spell they wove shall be unbroken
Until my latest hour.
These carols are a faint and fleeting token
Of their abiding power.

FRAGMENT

OF A JUVENILE ESSAY IN VERSE.

All things revolve with ceaseless change
Through nature's teeming, boundless range,
E'er since from eldest night
The fiat of the eternal mind
Impressed chaotic matter blind
With motion, form and light.

Adhering particles were mixed
And to their various functions fixed
Within the mighty scheme.
Light poured its vitalizing heat
Until creation was complete
And order rose supreme.

Digitized by Google

But though the primal elements
In combinations rare and dense
Through endless cycles run,
No particle to all the globe
Or to its vast ethereal robe
Has e'er been lost or won.

The very essences that mould
Our frames—at first inane and cold,
Dispersed through air and earth,—
Are yet coeval with the spheres
Whose chorus ravished angel ears
With joy o'er nature's birth.

Through rolling years, each race remains,
But like the summer-ripened grains,
The individuals pass,
Dissolved to nourish other forms
Of future life that ever swarms
From out the general mass.

* * * * * *

Proof, too, that universal law
Which overwhelmed the sage with awe
Its secret to unfold;
That marvelous law can thus alone
The worlds, through space eternal sown,
In even balance hold.

Digitized by Google

If but a single atom lacked,
The solar charm would cease to attract
Our darkened, wandering world:
One atom more would add a force
To send this planet from its course
To fiery ruin hurled.

The changes palpable to sense
All furnish ample evidence—
Germ culminates in germ;
The sea, the mist, the cloud, the rain,
Are links in observation's chain
To hold this doctrine firm.

* * * * * *

And is the animating soul,
With powers angelic at control,
Self-bounded and distinct?
The higher faith alone can see
With all that's past, with all to be
Its life forever linked.

Digitized by Google

FROM THE SHORE.

THE southern winds are piping loud,
All into spray the breakers shiver;
Fast flies, o'erhead, the black-winged cloud
Whose flaming tongues in fury quiver.

Yon cape that lifts it awful form,
So dreaded by the ocean-ranger,
Surveys the progress of the storm,
Exulting in the hour of danger.

The spirit of the rocky caves
Where dark the sea-weed curtain flutters,
Now like the ancient sibyl raves,
And what mysterious things he utters!

God pity now the hampered ship!
One fearful chance is open for her—
To wear her canvas, though she dip
Her yard-arms in the foamy horror!

Ah! strength of soul, however grand,
When in our course, where faults mis-shape it,
Whirls the dread vortex close at hand,
It bends us lowly to escape it.

Digitized by Google

DARK HOURS.

Oh dark is the hour
On the refugeless main,
When the tempest hath power
And man's efforts are vain;
When stricken with dread
Are the strong and the brave,
And death's chilly bed
Is the white-sheeted wave!

That hour, too, is dark
When within his lone cell
The captive must hark
To the summoning knell;
When terror appears
Dressed in colors so strong,
That the moment which nears,
Seems to linger too long.

But dark as the pall
Is that hour when the heart
Is destined, from all
It had cherished, to part;
When for hopes once in bloom
But now withered by woes,
The breast is a tomb
Yet without its repose!

Digitized by Google

THE VILLAGE CRŒSUS.

To see him you would scarcely think
He was so very great,
Till you hear his tumid pockets clink
To his self-important gait;
Then other people's pockets shrink
For six months after date.

At church what meekness does he wear;
But the home-life lifts the mask:
The family bible on that shelf there—
On this, a whiskey flask;
That closet used for secret prayer,
And this for a smuggled cask!

But when the village chapel swarmed
With clergy and with lay,
We saw him suddenly transformed
That yearly meeting day;
His charities were roused and warmed
Like a snake in the month of May.

We saw him near the altar stand
With penitential air,
And hold an offering in his hand
To make the worldly stare—
An offering with this meek demand:
Five dollars' worth of prayer!

Digitized by Google

Revolting thought! perhaps the sum
In such oblation spent
Was the clear revenue of rum
All vitrioled cent. per cent!
Howe'er it be, it did not come
A worse way than it went.

I thought of Simon Magus' rash
Yet similar desire;
But I looked in vain for the answering flash
Of holy, withering ire
Condemning the hypocrite and his cash
To hell's eternal fire.

AT PHILIPPI.

Midnight in the dungeon grim
Where the preachers of the word
Lay wtth heavy-fettered limb,
But their souls with heaven conferred;
And the prayer and chanted hymn
All their fellow-prisoners heard.

Hark! an earthquake's sudden shocks
Strike responsive to the strain.
And the shattered prison rocks
Like a wreck upon the main;
Broken are the bars and locks,
Rent from every hand the chain!

Digitized by Google

While the keeper, wild with fears,
Draws his sword and bares his breast,
The apostle's voice he hears,
Which his rash arm does arrrest.
Then before them he appears
Trembling with this great request:

"That salvation may be mine,
What, oh what must I achieve?"
"Grace shall be to thee and thine
If on Christ thou dost believe!"
Thus the liberty divine
Did that captive soul receive.

Ye who are as captives bound,
Ye whom doubts and fears enthral,
Such deliverance can be found
In his might who governs all;
Such the grace that does abound
When repentant sinners call.

Digitized by Google

FRANCESCO TO BIANCA.

LOVELY Bianca, my heart's dearest treasure,
Never again thy sweet face shall I see;
Still my dark thoughts, in retracing lost pleasure,
Wild though they wander, are faithful to thee.

Banished from friendship—e'en pity denied me,
Far from the scenes of our former delight,
Forests and caves in their solitude hide me,
Name, hopes and life all have suffered one blight.

When for thy favor my rival was seeking,
Mine was the madness that brooked no control;
Blood is the witness—oh, still it seems reeking
Red on my blade as the guilt on my soul!

Long to my bosom delight is a stranger,
Tired of my very existence I grow;
Restless in safety and reckless in danger—
Death is but cruel refusing his blow.

Lovely Bianca, my heart's dearest treasure,
Dire is the doom that has fallen on me;
All could I bear, but this woe beyond measure,
Through my own crime torn forever from thee!

Digitized by Google

TO THE MUSES.

Ye nymphs who, in olden time, dwelt
In a sacred recess of the grove
On that mountain, ere yet you had felt
What it is through creation to rove,

While thousands have access so free
To your presence and mystical shrine,
'Tis enough on an alien like me
That your smiles intermittently shine.

'Tis enough that my spirit is charmed
By the spell which they say you prepare,
And oft, as in panoply, armed
To combat the demon of care.

Then I crave not the polish of art
Nor wish my rude numbers more smooth,
If so they but lighten my heart
And its throbs of inquietude soothe.

Whom the walls of a study immure
Oft utter your oracles deep,
And the less comprehended, be sure,
The fuller the credence they reap.

Thus the robin's plain note in the dell
May be with indifference heard;
But the pedant admires Philomel,
Though he knows not the song or the bird.

Digitized by Google

No claims to your favors I lay,
Nor join in your numberless train;
But destiny gave me away
To your transports of pleasure and pain.

Else wherefore, great nine, was I born
With a heart so erroneously proud,
That the pageant of man it could scorn
Yet to feminine weakness has bowed?

Oh! the tutorless fancy of youth
Can never be brought to perceive
Such attractions in wisdom and truth
As in you and the daughters of Eve.

Hence every wild impulse can urge
Beyond reason's legitimate bound,
Till remorse, with the scorpion-hung scourge,
Repays every joy with a wound.

For such is the make of the wight
Over whom your strange witchery hangs,
He loses himself in delight
And awakes to the keenest of pangs.

Different passions within him are stirred
And he readily yields to their force;
So betwixt the sublime and absurd
He makes but a devious course.

Digitized by Google

The wise ones, with judgment amiss,
 Still deem his impetuous soul
Might bask in the moonbeams of bliss
 Submitting to cautious control.

But his being they cannot improve
 By prudence that calculates slow.
Should the comet all sluggishly move,
 'Twould diminish its luminous glow.

THE MOTHER-SPEECH.

Native language, mother tongue,
Gently spoken, sweetly sung,
 Hallowed memories endear it
Till, like some aerial tone
 From the seraph-land, we hear it
In the desert and alone.

Sad the mind is and confused
Where a foreign tongue is used,
 Which we too must join in speaking
With the carefulness of art
 And the weariness of seeking
Words that dwell not in the heart.

Digitized by Google

Hear the stately Roman speak,
Hear the strong, sonorous Greek,
 Like the storm-flood rush and tumble ;
Hear the Tuscan's dulcet tide ;
 Let the German torrent rumble
And the smooth Castilian glide ;

Let the Frankish step with grace,
In a quick but even pace ;
 And the studious ear may listen
Captivated for an hour ;
 But the eye through life must glisten
At one home word's sacred power.

SPERANZA.

Her face has the radiance of dreams unsung,
 Like that of an infant newly woke ;
Men call her Speranza in that sweet tongue
 Which Beatrice in Heaven spoke.

Less frequently, as the year roll on,
 Have her visits been,—but the very tear
Which mourns her now as forever gone
 Is the secret gem that draws her near.

Digitized by Google

THE STORM.

I.

Beyond the confines of the west
The day's last traces flee.
All earth is lying with stirless breast
As in dire expectancy.

Deep silence broods o'er the lonely hills
And o'er the snow-clad plains.
The sun has sunk, but his pathway fills
With the hue of the tide that battle spills
From an army's burning veins!

II.

Though no white waves assail the shore,
And no rude gust sweeps by,
Yet a look more boding never wore
The ocean and the sky.

The night draws on but it does not bring
The promise of repose;
It seems to spread its sable wing
Like the prophet's malison hovering
In the clouds where Babel rose.

III.

Far other events than the elements
About to wreak their rage
With all its wasteful consequence
These omens do presage.

Digitized by Google

Avert thine eye from the signs on high
And say, dost thou not discern
That we soon must wage with a foe malign
A conflict still more stern?

* * * * * *

There shall wailing be where once was glee,
But the right shall win at last
And peaceful thrive, as the fields revive
When the storm is overpast.

SONG.

THROUGH all the woods the robins sing
Their madrigals to soft-eyed spring,
While gentle evening comes to fling
Her eastward-reaching shadows.

The herds returning often stop
The young and tender blade to crop,
All gemmed with many a pearly drop,
Along the quiet meadows.

Come, dearest, let us forth to share
The pleasant time; this balmy air
Can kiss no other brow as fair
As that I am beholding.

And see, how even the loveliest flower
That shelters in your garden bower,
Abashed at beauty's richer dower,
Its blushing sweets is folding.

Digitized by Google

TO J. ATKINSON.

AGAIN the sun's obliquest ray
To nine dull hours restricts the day;
And earth is white and heaven is gray,
While gloomy trees
Shudder and wring their hands and pray
On bended knees.

And still I tread the humble round
That chillier deeps than snow-drifts bound;
And though some pleasure I have found
To cheer existence,
The famous fairy-haunted ground
Still keeps its distance.

When first in life's bright morning seen,
The future flaunts in heavenly sheen;
But, when arrived at grave nineteen,
We sadly miss its
Delights, or find them far between,
Like angels' visits.

Yet 'tis not all a dull surrounding;
I hear the surf its onset sounding,
I see the storm's fierce front confounding
Sea, sky and land,
And all the while my heart is bounding
To measures grand.

Digitized by Google

Then every legend, every lay,
Learned in some long-forgotten day,
Gleams on me, as the sudden ray
Amid the storm
Paints on the heaven-aspiring spray
The rainbow's form.

But most unhappy of his kind
Is he whose ever-roving mind,
Impatient purer bliss to find,
With fiery fleetness
Still rushes on and leaves behind
Untasted sweetness.

His breast is in chaotic state
Where hope and fear and love and hate
Alternately preponderate
And wisdom fails,
Withholding, but not wanting, weight
To right the scales.

As well the traveller might slake
His thirst at the Asphaltic Lake,
As one of such peculiar make
Could satisfy
His soul with what men scrape and rake
And sell and buy.

I love the girls, I love a song,
I hope I'm right, yet fear I'm wrong,

Digitized by Google

And when the gossips censure strong
My inclination,
I hate and scout the vulgar throng
In style Horatian.*

Their precepts I would fain obey
Whose twilight heads are cool and gray,
But dazzling follies round me play
And fire my veins,
Then resolution all gives way
And passion reigns.

Yet oft I take a view sublime
Of that Lethean gulf-stream, time;
And feel convinced no greater crime
Than mere neglect
Will drift us to the torrid clime
That few expect.

Ah! youth and vigor wane and dwindle
Till love no more its flame can kindle,
And life is one inglorious swindle,
Or with sly tread
Comes death, and from the half-run spindle
Cuts off the thread.

The high, the low, the grave, the gay
Make up their quotas of his prey;
Unlike some statesmen of our day
I could describe,
You cannot turn him any way
By dint of bribe.

* "Odi profanum vulgus et arceo."—*Horace.*

Digitized by Google

Divines are often wont to treat
Of life as frail, and time as fleet,
To make the sensual sinner meet
For saving grace;
But here's a metaphor complete
In shorter space:

Life is a sort of fastening
To time that, ever on the wing,
Draws through slack hands the slender string
Till all is gone,
Then off they drop without a thing
To rest upon.

They only are the truly wise
Who bind the moment as it flies
To some beneficent emprise;
The elevation,
Which they at length attain, defies
All gravitation.

The greatest prudence I have shown
Is just to purpose and postpone;
Though in my temperament were sown
Some virtuous seeds,
The field is rankly overgrown
With flowering weeds.

But latterly I have begun
To get the pruning process done;
And gentle showers and genial sun
May yet mature
The fruits and in the lengthy run
Good crops secure.

Digitized by Google

My tedious daily routine o'er,
The mines of knowledge I explore,
But still, in balancing my store
Of that material,
I find it as it was before—
Somewhat ethereal.

As duty bids, not taste inclines,
I trace the geometric lines,
Or con the algebraic signs,
Though here, the will—
As that pedantic phrase defines—
Is minus still.

For me the sciences abstruse
Possess small pleasure and less use.
Can sentiment delight to cruise
The bridge of asses,†
Or angle and hypotenuse
Help scale Parnassus?

With far more ardor I engage
In learning from the classic page
How poet, orator and sage
Sang, spake and taught,
Or how, with patriotic rage,
Stern valor fought.

† *Pons Asinorum*, the name facetiously given to the fifth proposition of Euclid.

Digitized by Google

The tinsel trickery that adorns
Most modern lays my spirit scorns.
They either sound like dinner-horns
Or penny whistles.
Well, grapes will never grow on thorns,
Nor figs on thistles.

NEW YEAR'S MORNING, 1878.

A ROYAL greeting to Seventy-eight,
As he marches through the eastern gate,
In his ruffled but stainless robe of state
With icicles bestudded.

The sceptre is not yet in his hand:
Pray Heaven it may not be more grand
Than just a simple olive wand
For peace and plenty budded.

We have longed for the regimen to shift,
The old year's burdens were hard to lift;
May the new have blessings in his gift
For general distribution;

But whether he carry our wishes out,
Give him the benefit of the doubt
And welcome the reign that is brought about
By a bloodless revolution.

Digitized by Google

A CHARACTER.

ALTHOUGH he could not learn the common art
Which sets the speech at variance with the heart,
Ne'er to the crowd his inner life was shown,
Nor was he to himself entirely known;
Yet never mortal, by the vulgar touch,
Was swayed, by turns, so little and so much.
In keenest sympathy, e'en from his birth,
With each vicissitude of sky and earth,
No fixed condition long his taste could please,
He courted turmoil, while he sighed for ease;
And hope, the dove, to him seemed never dear,
Save when she fluttered in the claws of fear.
His mind, with all the weeds of fancy filled,
Was harrowed deep enough, but never tilled.
His natural diffidence oft galled him sore,
His forced audacity galled others more.
Active in sport, in labor indolent,
He knew each phase of feeling save content.
Plain facts he missed, the latent he perceived,
And trusted most, where most men disbelieved.
So in his wildest or his tamest guise
He was a paradox to good men's eyes.
Unfitted for obedience or command,—
A peasant's figure, a patrician hand,
Midway between a gentleman and boor.

* * * * * * * *

Digitized by Google

MAJOR BRAY,

OF THE COUNTY MILITIA.

'Tis the day of the drill and the ranks soon fill
With the very flower of the nation.
But the bloodless plain for this campaign
Is somebody's turnip plantation.

But look at the man who leads the van,
An object to cause reflections;
He is major-in-chief by right of a leaf
Which he got from the book of directions.

He shows more skill in militia drill
Than in other departments of labor;
Though his hands were made for wielding the spade
Or anything else but a sabre!

Yet when he is clad in warlike red
With a borrowed horse to ride on,
He would easily pass as did the ass
That put the lion's hide on.

Digitized by Google

THE MAJOR'S MONOLOGUE.

At your service and the nation's,
I'm the gallant Major Bray,
With my uniform and rations
And my fifty cents a day.

War's a glorious profession
For a gentleman to fill,
Plying it without transgression
Of the law, Thou shalt not kill!

I was made expressly for it
By my bearing and my voice;
Mere civilians may abhor it,
Making sluggish life their choice.

In a dozen years of drilling
I have learned upon parade
All its arts, except the killing—
Not essential to the trade.

But my maiden sword I brandish
And such antics I perform,
I would like to see the Standish*
That I could not take by storm!

* Presumably Miles Standish, the hero of Plymouth.

Digitized by Google

Even now my bravery's noted ;
Everybody looks at me ;
I'm the only soldier-coated
Man in all our company.

Hannibal and Alexander !
I perhaps might rival you,
But the modern tongue of slander
Will not give a man his due.

When we march through country places,
'Tis a glorious sight to see
Windows lined with pretty faces
Smiling loyally on me.

Then to think how such sweet glances
Of fair lady on her knight
Used to shiver helms and lances,
Makes me hanker for a fight.

Then if trumpets loud were braying
I could raise as wild a din,
If some shot, too widely straying,
Might not chance to graze my skin.

With your corse the ground to measure
Where the leaden hail flies fast,
Is, no doubt, a thrilling pleasure
That is far too good to last.

Digitized by Google

For your country nobly dying
Talked about is very nice;
But this fact is past denying:
No one can enjoy it twice!

Yet in spite of this misgiving,
Death would never me appal,
If, thereafter, to the living
I could boast about my fall.

I have had a thousand fancies
Of adventure and escape,
And have stood some narrow chances
From the canister and grape.

And if things go on in quiet,
If no accident occurs
Like rebellion, raid or riot,
I am bound to win my spurs.

Without getting gashed and gory
I can be a son of Mars;
Give me gold and gin and glory
And the devil take the scars!

Digitized by Google

THE GARLAND.

COME teach me now some dainty song,
Ye little Sylphids that preside
The summer long
Over the garden's floral pride
And dress the earth as Phœbus' bride.

As softly as the enamored south
Lisps to the rose in sunlight clear,
Frame to my mouth
Some carol fit for Jennie's ear
And sweet, like her, and all sincere.

Oh could she know how oft I lift
Up to my lips this flowery band—
Her treasured gift—
Then she my heart might understand,
As I, the sweetness of her hand!

What matter if these woven flowers,
With all my care, can only live
A few brief hours?
Yet to my inmost soul they give
A bloom that is not fugitive.

They promise with their dying breath
That when the north winds, rudely bleak,
Have done to death
Their frail companions, I may seek
More lasting ones upon her cheek.

Digitized by Google

FAREWELL.

WRITTEN IN A COPY OF CHAMBERS' EUCLID.

OLD Euclid, farewell! our acquaintance was brief.
We part not in anger, we part not in grief;
Nay, justice compels me to say, as we part,
You were dear to my patience, if not to my heart.

I revere you as much as my youth will permit,
Nor doubt anything save your aid to our wit,
For I think from the day-star of nations there shines
A far better method of dealing with lines.

Why treat of the *upright*, the *mean*, and the *base?*
Daily life affords almost a parallel case:
Just minus the first, plus the foolish and vain,
And mankind is geometry, rather more plain!

Digitized by Google

TO A FLATTERER.

RESERVE that soft phrase for some timelier use.
Let candor inform you it vexes me less
To suffer a volley of causeless abuse
Than be lauded for virtues I do not possess.

There is full-blooded vice, there is hollow-souled sham,
And the first is more worthy of honest esteem.
My destiny is to be just what I am,
And yours to be all things but what you would seem.

A MOCK MONODY.

DEATH, the prayer of hundreds granting,
Did one errand to a charm;
And the dirge it set us chanting
Sounded like a fire-alarm.

Then the sexton, red and panting,
With his spade upon his arm,
Came and did the best day's planting
Ever done on Adam's farm!

Digitized by Google

TO J. ATKINSON.

Our pathways at length have begun to diverge,
So fortune capricious is pleased to ordain ;
But till Lethe's dark waters existence submerge
Shall our souls in the union of friendship remain.

I wander, as 'twere, from the bad to the worse
On a desert with scarce an oasis in sight.
Yet I cannot complain of a heavy reverse,
For my earthly possessions are notably light.

Wisdom dignifies neither my actions nor looks ;
For a hermit, perhaps, I am wholly too young ;
But a series of lessons, not found in the books,
Keeps more busy my thought and more silent my tongue.

O that freshness of spirit, vivacious and bold,
When we aim at the height, disregarding the mean !
I would give, if I had it, some thousands of gold,
Not to be what I hoped for, but what I have been.

Contentment smiled on us without being sought,
A maid by a passionate suit never won ;
No need was there then for distracting the thought
This thing to attain and the other to shun.

Our hearts were untainted, our heads were unschooled,
Our minds no rich-freighted idea could float ;
But a few people's conscience we rigidly ruled
By the law of the mischievous stanzas we wrote.

Digitized by Google

Yet joys more enduring oft hallowed those hours
When mirth in the lap of reflection was lulled,
And, revering, we bent o'er those perishless flowers
That spirit aspiring from Paradise culled.

Or we gloried with him* whose Promethean fire
But dazzled the more that its altar was dark;
At whom, after basely provoking his ire,
The whole pack of critics no longer durst bark.

Not to questions of morals our thoughts we confined
Nor measured his lines with mechanical scan,
But we soared on the pinions sublime of his mind,
And admiring the poet, lost sight of the man.

Through the small but choice list of illustrious names,
The grave and the tender engaged us by turns;
But the strongest and far the most permanent claims
On our sympathy came from the genius of Burns.

His songs that so lively a pleasure impart
Show nature in simplest yet fairest attire,
More pleasing indeed from the absence of art
For man teaches not what the heavens inspire.

Then our first chanted rhymes, rather warm, I confess,
Came out with a promise that very soon fades;
Because of their peasant-like manner and dress
They flourished and died in their own native shades

* Byron.

Digitized by Google

It was much that a village our works should discuss,
It was more that some persons detested the sound;
Approbation was never so pleasant to us
As the anger which showed that our satire could
[wound.

Yes, such the amusements that managed to steal
Our leisure, then deemed at a trival cost;
And, indeed, there are times even now when I feel
That the moments so spent were not utterly lost.

For, memory glowing, each juvenile whim
Arises from seeming oblivion once more.
Thus, a sketch on a slate may in coldness grow dim,
But the warmth reproduces it plain as before.

And out of this madness some method may rise,
Some figures that strike, though not long to exist,
As the tempest piles up cloudy towers in the skies
That in a dead calm would have settled in mist.

Digitized by Google

A RECOLLECTION.

O'ER the white waste of drifted sands unstable
We climbed the sedgy dune,
Where, like a sleeping giant, old Cape Sable
Basked at the feet of June.

Beneath the summer noon, the shore-birds twittered
Around in glancing flocks,
And, like a fair display of jewels, glittered
The foam-bells on the rocks.

Deep peace was in the air and on the billows,
That in smooth slumber lay,
Or gently tossed upon their sandy pillows
As infants wake to play.

The breeze moved landward, scarcely felt in blowing,
But such the fisher hails
With joy when, after weary hours of rowing,
It swells his spritted sails.

The brave flotilla then like snowy sprinkles
Far outward we could trace;
The sight was fair and seemed to have smoothed the [wrinkles
From out old ocean's face.

No envious shadow on the flood descended;
Unflecked, the sky's broad sweep
In silent grandeur with th' horizon blended,
Deep calling unto deep.

Digitized by Google

And every shadow from my life retreating,
Left free the placid mind;
The finite with the infinite was meeting
Undimmed and unconfined.

How many times my eager gaze had rested
Upon that sea and shore;
But never, never had they been invested
With such a charm before.

They wear it still in calm ideal perfection,
Though years since then have flown:
That summer day's unclouded recollection
Shall ever be my own.

SONG.

'Twas night, and all was still, except
The flow of the summer sea;
Love's star alone its vigil kept
And where the folded flow'rets slept
It led my way to thee.

Our meeting lips and mutual eyes
Drank glowing blisses there;
And full of questions and replies
Of tenderest import were the sighs
That charmed the dewy air.

Digitized by Google

And now 'tis night: the sky arrayed
With many a brilliant star
Hangs o'er me like an endless shade
As if the morning were delayed
With love and thee—afar.

Those lights that play o'er the glassy tide
From angel-bowers may be;
Not one of them my steps shall guide,
But the thought of a distant green hill-side
Is a ghost that follows me.

JOHN THE SOLDIER.

A MEDIÆVAL SPANISH LEGEND.

In Andalusia lived a youth,
Some half-score centuries since,
Descended, so tradition said,
From some old Gothic prince,
As plainly did his noble form
And gallant soul evince.

His real name I hide, because
From modern tongue 'tis gone;
To speak it right would set one's jaws
Between a gasp and yawn;
A Celto-Gothic name it was,
But we will call him John.

Digitized by Google

No title or estate had he;
His patrimonial right
By the invading Saracen
Had been swept out of sight;
And so, as duty bound, he went
His country's foes to fight.

There long he served and well he fought
On many a bloody field,
And with his good two-handed sword
Which none so well could wield,
He mowed through many a Paynim horde,
Through turban, moon* and shield.

But when two dozen years had past,
The soldier sought to lay
His arms aside and live in peace;
But judge of his dismay,
When sixpence and a loaf of bread
Was all he got for pay!

They would not hear his plea at all,—
'Twas useless to insist;
Pablo la Mierda (Miser Paul)
Controlled the pension list,
And squeezed the shape from every coin
On which he closed his fist.

* The crescent, or new moon, the Muslim standard.

Digitized by Google

Of all the cuts the soldier knew
This was the most unkind,
And for a certain time he felt
To mutiny inclined;
But as he reasoned with himself,
These thoughts rose in his mind:

"Carajo! what am I to do?
I've always shunned disgrace,
But danger never; as for death,
I've dared him to his face.
But now to die for lack of food
Would be a piteous case.

"But all my life I've hated care,
Just as a soldier should;
And now, to give up to despair
Would surely do no good,
'Twould only help to vex the brain,
And over-heat the blood."

Then merrily he marched along
Unmindful of his lack,
Chanting a Saturnalian song,
And with his haversack—
All empty—strapped, as was his wont
On service, to his back.

At length he met a holy friar,
In whose apostleship
One sacred precept was observed;
He'd neither purse nor scrip,
And he declared that for a week
No food had passed his lip.

Digitized by Google

"Por Dios!" the son of Mars replied,
"'Tis little I can give;
For all the time I served my king,
Your reverence must believe,
A sixpence and this loaf of bread
Were all I did receive.

"But, sir, it is the soldier's pride
To give to those in need.
Here's half my rations; so farewell,
And gaily may you feed."
The friar received the food with thanks,
And started to proceed.

But scarcely had he vanished, when
Again he showed his nose,
And finished up a lengthy tale
Of poverty and woes
By begging for a little cash
To buy him shoes and clothes.

The soldier did not hesitate,
Nor say with lengthened face
That he must first investigate
The merits of the case.
He pulled his sorry sixpence straight
From out its hiding-place.

"Now," said the friar, "my Christian friend,
If anything you want,
Ask it of me—whate'er it be
I have the power to grant.
For having served the king so long,
Your recompense is scant."

Digitized by Google

"Then grant me, sir," the veteran said,
"That I may have the knack
To make the things I wish for, come
Into my haversack."
"Sea hecho," said the mendicant;
"You never more shall lack."

The soldier then resumed his march
And travelled very fast.
Footsore and much fatigued, he reached
A little town at last.
As he was entering into it,
A baker's shop he passed.

He saw against the window placed,
In many a tempting row,
Coiled sausages and spongy rolls
As white as drifting snow.
"Into my haversack," he cried,
And into it they go!

El Panadero, badly scared
By such miraculous deeds,
Having a long time blankly stared,
Began to tell his beads.
Meanwhile the soldier calmly fared
Upon the best of feeds.

Then at th' alcalde's office next
Himself he did present,
With a brief story as to how
His lustiest years were spent,
Concluding with the mild request
For lodgings free of rent.

Digitized by Google

Th' alcalde told him, from the town
A short way, he would find
A house unoccupied, but stored
With things of every kind,
And he might take up quarters there,
If he was so inclined.

"But," added he, "its owner, who
Unbounded wealth did boast,
Died suddenly, before the priest
Could elevate the host;
Now no one dares approach the place,
'Tis haunted by his ghost."

The soldier waited for no more,
And soon the house he found—
Cellar and larder flowing o'er,
An orange grove around;
Each branch beneath its golden store
Was bending to the ground.

He piled the grapes upon the board
In many a luscious bunch;
And from the cellar's various hoard
He drew, for mixing punch;
Then up the flue the bright flames roared
To warm a little lunch.

But scarcely had the cheery blaze
Upon his features shone,
When up the chimney's sooty maze
Was heard a gurgling groan,
And "May I fall?" a voice exclaimed
In no melodious tone.

Digitized by Google

"Fall, if you like," the soldier said,
"'Twill jar me not a peg!"
But as he stretched his hand again
To tip the genial keg,
Grandios! beside him on the hearth
There fell a human leg!

At this the honest soldier's hair
Began to stand upright;
He felt the shadow of a fear,
In truth, as well he might—
A fear which loosened not his joints,
For he was rather tight.

And soon there fell another leg,
The former one to meet;
Next came the body, then the head,
Then all the limbs complete;
The total took a ghostly shape
That rose upon its feet.

Awhile the apparition glared
As silent as the grave;
Then, as if satisfied at length,
A spectral smile he gave,
And muttered in metallic voice,
"I see that thou art brave!"

"My courage," answered John, "I've proved
In many a desperate scene;
Who buys it for a sixpence now
Gets sold himself, I ween."
"Thou served'st the king," the spectre groaned,
"He served thee—devilish mean!"

Digitized by Google

"But follow me and thou shalt see
That I can amply pay
The man that carries out my wish
In one particular way."
The soldier, Bacchus ne'er so drunk,
Rose, reeling, to obey.

His ghostly guide led on and sought
The cellar's deepest shade,
Where, after a few minutes' thought,
He turned about and said:
"Now, valiant soldier, doff thy coat
And dig here with a spade."

"Dig there yourself," the soldier said;
"I'll serve no ghost like you."
Thereat the spectre took the spade,
And hard to work he flew;
And from the excavation made
Three wooden boxes drew.

"This box," he said, "is full of bread
On which the poor shall feast,
And this is filled with silver coins;
Go, give them to the priest,
That he from purgatorial pains
May get my soul released.

"But this last box," continued he,
"Is full of solid gold.
It shall be thine, with all the estate
Which I in life controlled,
If thou accomplish faithfully
The things which I have told."

Digitized by Google

"That," answered John, "is something worth ;
No effort will I spare.
A man can move both heaven and earth
By means of cash and prayer."
The apparition bowed its thanks
And melted into air.

The soldier did as he was bid,
And worked the soul's release ;
Then, blessed with plenty and content,
He passed his days in peace,
And saw his worldly heritage
From year to year increase.

Now in the realms of endless night,
There was among the rest
A very cunning demon-sprite
Whom Satan loved the best ;
He saw his sovereign's downcast look
And soon the cause he guessed.

"My liege," said he, "you're grieved, I see,
And I suspect the cause ;
'Tis that vile soldier, who has dared
To counteract your laws.
I only wait for your command
Without a saving clause !".

This pleased the master-devil well,
And for it he agreed
To teach his favorite all the arts
By which the great succeed ;
He praised his pluck, he wished him luck
And sent him off with speed.

Digitized by Google

The soldier in his spacious hall
Was seated, when came in
With swaggering air and bristly hair,
That graceless spawn of sin,
Who made his mighty mission known
With many a demon grin.

"Ahora hablas," answered John,
"The journey will me suit!
But first I'll go and fetch some wine,
For thou must needs recruit;
Meanwhile, sit down—regale thyself
With this delicious fruit."

The sprite obeyed, and stealthily
The soldier stepped aside
Into his armory and returned
With military stride,
And then "Into my haversack!"
With clarion voice he cried.

As quick as thought, the incubus
Was seized by magic force,
And thought he strove to scratch and bite
He could not change his course,
But in the sack and out of sight
His yells grew feebly hoarse.

Incontinent, the soldier grasped
A mallet made of oak
And dealt upon the struggling mass
With many a vigorous stroke,
Indeed, he never slacked his hand
Till every bone he broke.

Digitized by Google

When Satan saw his favorite come
All beaten black and blue,
His features, always rather dark,
Assumed an inky hue;
And when he heard the dismal tale,
No bounds his fury knew.

Then he resolved to go himself
Nor wait a single hour,
Nor sleep, nor eat, nor drink, but seek
For whom he might devour,
That is, to get the soldier safe
Within his vengeful power.

Now John the Soldier, who was wont
To be upon his guard,
Awaited Lucifer's approach
With every gate unbarred,
But with his haversack in hand
He strolled about the yard.

When Satan came, the soldier said,
"What business brings you here?
Know you that I have served my king
And am unknown to fear?"
His darkness, almost blind with rage,
Responded with a sneer:

"Now shall you serve a mightier prince
And get full pay beside."
"Get you into my haversack!"
The valiant soldier cried;
And in he went, in double quick,
Despite his fiery pride.

Digitized by Google

And then the soldier swung on high
A massive iron club,
And as the ponderous engine fell
'Twas rough on Beelzebub,
Whose towering form in little time
Was battered to a stub.

Even as the wine-press crushes out
The virtue of the grape,
The martial mill reduced his rage
And let him out the scrape
With not a single vestige left
Of that majestic shape.

When dim on Satan's blood-shot eyes
His hot headquarters rose,
"Haste, guards," he cried, "bolt every door
And every loophole close.
That varlet ne'er shall enter here
To trouble my repose!"

And now all Spain this moral learns:
A man, in word and deed,
Who from a foeman never turns
Or from a friend in need,
Can close the deepest pit that burns
In any churchman's creed.

Digitized by Google

A JOYLESS JUNE.

Now when bud and bloom are meeting
In the coronet of June,
Would that I could give her greeting
In her own celestial tune.

Heaven unfolds the choicest drapery
For this darling of the year.
But the pageant looketh vapory
Viewed through one remorseful tear.

For the human panorama
With its shifting scenes I see.
I am nothing to the drama;
Would it were the same to me.

Spotless is the water-lily,
Pure the sweet white rose may blow,
But to one whose heart is chilly
They are flakes of summer-snow.

O, the frailest is the finest,
With the maiden as the flower,
And the light we call divinest
Dawns and dies within an hour.

Yet what marvel, when the ages
Cool the suns to sparkless dust,
If our blood one moment rages,
And then mantles o'er with rust?

Digitized by Google

Beauty fades, love droops his pinion ;
They are attributes divine :
Their omnipotent dominion
Has been ruinous to mine.

Thus with Ovid when they stripped him
To enjoy the genial heat,
Till the Scythian winter nipped him
And congealed his tears to sleet !

LOVED AND LOST.

[The subjoined songs are attempted translations of three detached interludes in the first part of Goethe's "Faust," in which the unhappy Gretchen first desires to know more about the polite stranger, then discloses her love for him and finally deplores its sad consequences.]

I.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

I would give anything to see,
Or know where he is now—
That gentleman who spoke to me
With such a graceful bow.

Refined and noble he must be,
'Tis written on his brow ;
And yet inclined to be more free
Than prudence should allow.

Digitized by Google

II.

AT THE WINDOW

My joy is done,
My heart is sore,
My peace is flown
To come no more!

I loathe the spot—
Though once so fair—
Where he is not;
'Tis cold and bare.

My temples ache,
They throb so strong.
My heart will break
With waiting long.

Against the glass
I press my brows
To see him pass
From out the house.

His sprightly step
I love to mark,
His manly shape,
His eyes so dark,

His words that flow
With readiness,
His smile and oh,
His fond caress!

Digitized by Google

Before he goes
I burn, I pine
To clasp him close
And call him mine ;

To kiss and kiss
And hold him fast,
And in such bliss
To breathe my last !

My joy is done,
My heart is sore,
My peace is flown
Forevermore !

III.

BEFORE AN IMAGE OF THE VIRGIN.

Thou sinner's friend,
In pity bend
Thine eyes upon a maid undone.
Thy gentle heart
Felt every dart
That pierced thine agonizing son !

In misery lone
To heaven's throne
What sighs methinks I hear thee send !
But ah, who heeds
This heart that bleeds,
The pains that this poor bosom rend ?

Digitized by Google

The pangs my soul is feeling,
The coldness o'er me stealing,
Thou knowest and thou alone.
Where'er I go
What bitter woe
Bursts forth with every groan!

I am—no, not alone;
Through weary nights of waking
It will not let me sleep;
For this my heart is breaking,
I weep and weep and weep.

The flower-stand in my window
I bathed with tear-drops free,
When from its blooms this morning
I culled a wreath for thee.

The sun shone in my window;
I saw the light with dread,
For still it found me sitting
In sorrow on my bed.

O blessed name,
From death and shame
Now save me with thy holy aid!
Thou sinner's friend,
In pity bend
Thine eyes upon a ruined maid

Digitized by Google

AT JERICHO.

The freestone fane had packed within
Its solemn walls that host to whom
The Lord imputeth ne'er a sin
From Adam to the day of doom.
But they were eager to impute,
For they had come to persecute
Young, tender-footed heresy,
Who halted at the stumbling-block
Of hopeless, endless misery
For all except the chosen flock!

There tingled to my finger-tips
A sense of the Apocalypse:
The spectacles ablaze with ire—
A sea of mingled glass and fire—
The saints with heads as white as wool,
The angels with their vials full,
Slain heresy—the pink of feasts—
The elders, too, if not the beasts!

By friendly aid, a man had reached
That place where charity was preached.
A wretched creature, lame and blind,
Beside the sacred porch reclined
That he might turn to good account
This new Bethesda's troubled fount.
The sky, the earth were lost to him
With sightless eyes and shrivelled limb.

Digitized by Google

A placard hung upon his breast
Was pleading with a mute request,
And thus the scrawling legend ran:
"*Pity a poor, blind, helpless man!*"

O satire on our social pride,
And libel on our art,
Where charity's soft cloak is tied
Around a stony heart!

But those who feel as well as see,
Such line becomes for them
The "*Iesou, eleeson me*"
Graven on a priceless gem.

Out where the blessed sunlight shone
Linking this footstool with the throne,
In whose stupendous shade they bowed,
Poured forth the dinner-seeking crowd.
They trampled past the crippled wretch
Who tried his trembling hand to stretch;
With scornful or averted eye
Both priest and Levite passed him by.
I marked them well, but no one lent
The Lord that day a single cent!

I said—for I was wicked then
And loathed the heartlessness of men;
And where a poet loves or loathes,
The one with majesty he clothes,

Digitized by Google

The other, with a felon's garb
And pins it with a rankling barb—
I said: O misery's favorite child,
Let some one bear you to the wild,
There while the boughs, like Jonah's gourd,
A screen from sun and shower afford,
The clamorous calls of hunger stop
With acorns that the squirrels drop,
Until you muster strength to raise
Your voice and cry "yet forty days!"

Or if indulgent heaven retract
And Nineveh remain intact,
Then get yourself transported where
Some prodigal can hear your prayer.
He might be melted into giving
The remnant of his riotous living.
When he reforms, then go and dine
Not on the calf, but with the swine,
But waste no precious time in search
Of bread beside a freestone church!

Digitized by Google

DEATH OF LOVELACE.

[Richard Lovelace, chief of the cavalier poets, was a splendid figure at the court of the unhappy Charles I. His wit, gallantry, and personal attractions made him a general favorite. During the civil war he served his king faithfully and well, for which he was imprisoned by the victorious party. After his release he wandered for a time obscure and friendless. While yet quite young he died in circumstances of extreme wretchedness. Previous to this, his mistress, Lucy Sacheverell, whom he had celebrated under the name of "Lucasta," was married to another person, supposing that Lovelace had died in France. His songs, mostly amatory, are remarkable, considering the age, for tenderness and purity of sentiment.]

METHOUGHT I saw him in his last heart-sickness
Alone, and heard above the thunder's roll
Those accents clear that gave unwonted quickness
To all the swelling currents of my soul.
That voice—oh! grandeur once had listened to it,
While all the poet's fervor it expressed;
But now a deeper pathos shuddered through it
As thus he breathed his latest wish to rest:

'Round me the elements in fury waken
But not like human wrongs my heart they rend.
To me, degraded, outcast and forsaken,
To me the trees their sheltering arms extend.
As some lone bird whose mate has been down-stricken,
Nor longer calls him to the widowed nest,
I've strayed, love's light is gone, the shadows thicken,
And I am grown so weary—let me rest.

Digitized by Google

The morning's promise now no more can cheer me,
Nor sunset's portent chill me with despair.
All, all is past, and nothing lingers near me
Save the great Presence that is everywhere.
Here was the desert. One green spot was in it,
Towards which my steps irregularly pressed.
It seemed just now one struggle more might win it,
But I am tired and only wish to rest.

Where are the brilliant honors that attended
When gayest 'mid the courtly throng I moved,
By the most powerful in the realm befriended,
And by the fairest in the world beloved?
How sad it is to think that when least needed
Such lavish kindness paid my lightest jest,
And now my bitter groans must pass unheeded!
Cease, cruel thoughts, and let me sink to rest.

Is this the hand that, when the clarion sounded
To the fierce onset, couched the royal lance?
Is this the heart that in the conflict bounded
As eager as the reveller in the dance?
Is this the voice that could our squadrons rally,
When the grim zealots smote down helm and crest?
Is this the voice that rang through death's dark valley
Now feebly pleading for the hour of rest?

Ah, wretched life! What is it but the action
Of drawing, as a task, the painful breath
With not one hope, with not one faint attraction
To lure my dim eyes from the blank of death?

Digitized by Google

No more the lacerated chords of feeling
Vibrate with feverish pangs. 'Tis best, 'tis best.
The troubled fount of tears is fast congealing
Beneath those cold dark clouds—but I must rest.

Adored Lucasta! Tenderly and proudly
I sang that name once, but my song was weak.
I've taught it to the storms of night, and loudly
I've heard them call her when I could not speak.
She is another's, yet she did not leave me;
'Twas fate forbade that we should be so blest.
I must no more lament. It could bereave me
Of every hope save that of final rest.

Ah! this will be no fitful slumber, giving
One moment's opiate to recurring pain—
The ebb and flow of anguish ever living
In a crushed heart and madly throbbing brain.
Yet might I, ere this icy languor bound me,
Repose my head upon her faithful breast
And feel once more love shed its dews around me—
No matter—I am weary and must rest.

Blow on, rude winds. You cannot make me shiver.
Why, they have changed their howling tone of fear
To dulcet sounds as of a flowing river!
And whence is that strange melody I hear?
What lovely star is that? Can mortal seeing
Transpierce the shade that does these orbs invest?
Dim earth, farewell. Forget I e'er had being.
Dear Christ, forgive and take me to thy rest!

Digitized by Google

EUTHANASIA.

I.

When the cup of my years shall be broken by death,
And life tremble frail on the last parting breath—
A period I would not delay—
Let those be around me whose love I have known,
Too kind to disturb with a tear or a groan
My soul as it passes away.

II.

The lamp, ere expiring, more brightly awakes.
The lyre, when o'ermastered by transport, it breaks,
Rings out in sublimest of tones.
The swan looks to heaven and sings as she dies;
But man, only man, casts behind him his eyes
And numbers past moments with groans.

III.

Oh! what are those days that ye wail for them so?
The joyous too fleet and the grievous too slow,
And all with deception abound.
I never took root in the soil that ye mourn,
The flower is laid low but no fibres are torn,
And no echoes of ruin resound.

Digitized by Google

IV.

It never disturbs my composure to know
That the spirit of life to its author I owe,
That my body is due to the dust.
And when nature shall call me to pay the last debt
Let me cheerfully answer. Who pays with regret
Is surely unworthy the trust.

V.

Yet not like a hireling who labors his day,
While his fraudulent thought is employed but to pray
For the quick going down of the sun;
I would honestly, faithfully finish the piece
Nor long for dismissal, nor ask for release
Till the work I was born for is done.

VI.

But the every-day objects of envy and strife,
The hopes, the desires and the pleasures of life
All, all could I gladly resign,
Save of spirits congenial the intercourse sweet,
The tremulous sigh and the amorous beat
Of a bosom pressed warm against mine.

VII.

Ah! yes, on the young blooming cheek to behold
The innocent blush the soft secret unfold,
And from lips so inviting to hear
That murmur which thrills through the regions above,
Sweet music to mortals and angels—I love.—
Death, spare a remembrance so dear.

Digitized by Google

VIII.

Yet needless that prayer ; for the stars which survey
A flame so divinely informing the clay
Absorb those delectable sighs,
And sound them forever in raptures refined,
Inaudible but to the purfied mind
When it follows them up to the skies.

IX.

My soul drank in love when existence was new,
And then the emotions within me that grew
Instinctively burst into voice.
Thus a bird 'mid the branches, all carelessly rocked,
When the wide-flaming portals of morn are unlocked
By nature is taught to rejoice.

X.

How oft when a child, on a summer day bright,
Have I lain as immerged in a sea of delight
Where the rushes waved over my rest.
And my thoughts and my gaze floated up through the skies
With infinite searching, till, closing my eyes,
I could see the abodes of the blest.

XI.

And yet I recall when my joy was intense
In all I beheld, it was dimmed by a sense
Of some brief indescribable gloom ;
As when from the sunny cerulean deeps,
Though but for a moment some cloud-shadow sweeps
O'er a field in its undulant bloom.

Digitized by Google

XII.

I ask not, I care not to leave a great name.
Whose life is engrossed by the worship of fame
Has beyond it no brighter reward.
What recks the young eagle when proudly he wings
Towards the full-blazing sun, if the shadow he flings
Be traced on earth's mutable sward?

XIII.

Inscribe not a line o'er my last low abode,
Nor prison my dust 'neath a monument's load;
On the mound in the stillness of even
Enough that some loved one may piously kneel,
And blest in that humble position, may feel
Much nearer to me and to heaven.

BAHAMAS.

SUGGESTED BY THE FREQUENT SHIPWRECKS, ACCIDENTAL AND OTHERWISE, ON THOSE ISLANDS.

VEXED is the shipman's way
'Mid the Bahamas gay.
Sea-tigers, sharp for prey
'Neath the blue surface,
Growling, oft rise and rip
Open the staunchest ship.
Men of the ashen lip,
Ere the salt death ye sip,
Oh could ye only skip
Where the green turf is!

Digitized by Google

Oft through the din and dark
Scuddeth the naked bark,
As from the pirate-shark
Flieth the dolphin.
Nor can her course be checked
Though her pale crew expect
Soon to be wholly wrecked,
Where the hoarse reefs project,
Which the waves, foam-beflecked,
Dig a death-gulf in!

Many a gallant band
Under approved command
Stick at a bank of sand,
Ere they can make that land
Tropic and curious;
Land of melado butts,
Dotted with coolie huts,
Dappled with cocoanuts,
Seamed with volcano-ruts,
Where the Hidalgo struts,
Grave yet luxurious.

Oft in the mazy strait,
Master and only mate
Lose both their ship and freight,
Then by their wretched state
Prove their endurance.
Nobly poor Jack behaves
Rafting o'er coral-caves,

Digitized by Google

Calm while the tempest raves,
Knowing some landsman saves
From the englutting waves
All the insurance.

Often the narrow track
Windeth with jibe and tack
As a man playeth back-
Gammon or checkers.
Then when the keel is stuck,
Ere the pumps fail to suck,
Ere the bunts in they tuck
Cometh the captain's luck
In a good bargain struck
With the bold wreckers.

Hear from our captain's lip,—
Saved from the oozy drip,
Saved on a floating chip—
All his last luckless trip,
"Some one was Joner."
Such is the captain's tale
Cool as a water-pail.
But the truth will prevail:
In that same wrecking sale
There was an ancient whale
Took in his owner!

Digitized by Google

JUSTICE.

'Tis well when true desert is crowned with praise
And gratitude the heart-felt tribute pays,
Whate'er the form in which it may appear,
Thrill from the tongue or sparkle in a tear,
Or, ere the impulse cool to stiff design,
Pour all its pathos in the flowing line.
What pride we feel in him whose matchless tongue
The knell of tottering despotism rung,
In those heroic days when thought and speech
Taught many a lesson arms could never teach.
Such men are not to any land confined,
They spoke for me and you and all mankind.

Now when the shallow, factious demagogue
Forgets the ninth clause of the Decalogue,
And when his party, in some luckless hour,
Leap o'er the bounds of decency to power,
And teach a servile press, that parrot brood,
To chirp laudations, while they gape for food,
What breast but feels, from slavishness exempt,
A hatred equalled only by contempt?
Oh did the laws but hold to justice strict
And for each crime due penalty inflict,
The men, who bolstering up a party name,
Live by their heads, should perish by the same!

Digitized by Google

INVOCATION.

Ye shades of those who graced the olden time,
And breathed the air of wit's inspiring clime,
Return once more, if Pluto's iron gate
Permit transition to a sadder state—
Charon for you his stranded barge would launch;
Your wreath outshines the Trojan's golden branch—
Return, and viewing with astonished eyes,
What talents lead, what merits win the prize,
Tell us, if in some spheres of great pretence,
(The sure concomitant of little sense)
The gold of learning has not run to dross
And glitters but with superficial gloss.
Methinks the Stagyrite would view with pain
His lore neglected, treated with disdain,
Or blindly heaped upon a barren brain.
Even Maro's mildness would entirely yield
To see how lean a herd profane his field,
Esteem themselves the master of his best,
And sadly mangle more than they digest!

Digitized by Google

ODE TO IGNORANCE.

A WINGED yet plumeless creature, like the bat,
Begot of night;
Erring as much on this side as on that,
For want of light,
In daytime oft 'neath some pretentious hat
Close hid from sight.

Bold sprite! not always does it fix its nest
'Neath humble eaves;
But oft to mitre, coronet and crest
It firmly cleaves.
And over many and many a Sunday's vest
A film it weaves.

The antiquarians know not when 'twas hatched.
You lift the screen
When some time-honored systems are unthatched;
And I have seen
Its foot-prints on some modern records scratched,
Not far between.

Will not the critics, calmly looking on
With sight less blurred,
Swear that the bat throughout my lines has gone
O'er every word,—
And what I took to be a rare white swan
Was that same bird?

Digitized by Google

It may be so. But what is done is done
And past repair.
My atmosphere henceforward it shall shun
If all the glare
Of classic light from Pentheus' double sun
The fowl can scare.

I do not like its note—a grating pipe
Not half so clear
As that with which the flushed short-wheeling snipe
Salutes the ear,
And which the autumn-tide serene and ripe,
Has rendered dear.

Oh let it flit forever whence it came—
Where darkness dwells,
Where superstition, ancient wrinkled dame,
Her legends tells;
Where bigotry on every other name
Some brimstone smells
And dire old discord drowns the trump of fame
With Thracian yells!

Digitized by Google

TO A FASTIDIOUS MAID.

THEY tell me, dear girl, of the vine
That however propitious the skies,
Unless 'round support it can twine,
It trails on the gravel and dies.

So woman, the animal grape,
When she turns from her natural trust,
Can scarcely expect to escape
Going downward unpressed to the dust.

In the sentinel glance of your eye
There is fire, when your anger is hot;
But it makes little cupid fight shy
For fear that himself should be shot.

Nor can the vain flourish of art
For the absence of candor atone;
And if e'er you would capture a heart
You must learn to surrender your own.

Digitized by Google

OUR TORQUEMADA.

T. D. T.

Upon that brow so high yet meek,
Upon that never-smiling cheek,
Upon those lips ordained to speak
The living word,
Intolerance, with one grimy streak,
God's image blurred.

And now the heretic must quake
Like poor Servetus at the stake,
When for his heavenly master's sake,
John thought it good
To start a sacrificial bake
With green hardwood.*

* I am not sure that there was any truth in the report, long current, that green wood was used in the burning of Servetus, in order to prolong his agony.

Digitized by Google

THE TWO MONARCHS.

THE SAD RENCONTRE OF CHARLES VI. OF FRANCE.

A KING on a progress was heading his train
All clad in their armor and gear;
And they rode, and they rode till they came to a plain
With a thick grove of cypresses near.

Out of this rushed a man, most gigantic in size,
Coal-black from his head to his feet,
And visible but to his majesty's eyes,
Made haste the procession to meet.

He spoke—and his voice had that musical ring
Which by cloud-splitting thunder is made—
Halt, there! Whither ridest thou, miserable king?
Turn back, thou art foully betrayed!

That moment a page dropped his lance to the ground,
Having fallen asleep on his steed,
And the monarch felt sure that its glean and its sound
Were the signals that doomed him to bleed.

In the blindness of fury he turned himself back,
And a dozen or so of his band,
As fast and as fierce as his sabre could hack,
He laid low with a very high hand.

They finally bound him and got him confined
To make him less rash in his ways,
And thus, in a dungeon and out of his mind,
He lingered the rest of his days.

Digitized by Google

Then soon, like a swarm that has lost its queen-bee,
The nation was totally dazed,
Till an enemy landed from over the sea
And his standard triumphantly raised.

'Twas the sovereign of Hades—so runs the romance—
Who came from the grove and o'erthrew
The mind of that popular sovereign of France,
Because he was honest and true.

Things have changed. If His Darkness has ever been known
To ruin earth's royalty since,
'Twas because, like the Turk, he could bear near the throne
No rival in monarch or prince.

THE POETIC ART.

FOUNDED ON HORACE'S FAMOUS LETTER TO THE PISOS.

I AM going to give some poetic advice
And each son of the muses should think of it twice
Ere he writes his first line, if his name he would carve
On the column of fame when his time comes to starve!

Suppose that a painter his canvas should spread
And sketch you a fine looking feminine head,
But, neglecting to follow a natural course,
Should fashion the neck like to that of a horse

Digitized by Google

And finish his picture by grouping together
Some parts of most creatures of fur, scale and feather,
Until the fair face he had skilfully put
At the top, has the tail of a fish for the foot.
Though his colors were faultlessly toned and refined,
You would think the poor painter was out of his mind.
A work so prodigious would soon be pulled down,
And sold for a carpet-mat miles out of town.
Yet believe me, a picture like that, is no worse—
Nay, not half so bad as those efforts in verse,
Where the author, no matter how fairly he starts,
Neglects the judicious relation of parts,
But jumbles ideas from farthest extremes
Incoherent and wild as a lunatic's dreams,
So that unity nowhere appears to prevail
And the whole, as we say, is without head or tail.
The line may be flowing, high-colored and sweet
And the measure as light as a ballet-girl's feet;
'Tis a failure, for taste can more safely dispense
With harmonious sound than harmonious sense.
"Ah but," says some rhymer, "the whole world agrees
That poets and painters may try what they please,
And the standard of taste very often permits
The wildest attempts as original hits."
I know it. That license I freely allow;
I use it sometimes; I am using it now,
But never to such an unbridled extent
That incongruous things are commingled and blent;
And whatever my freedom, I'm careful to keep
The hawks from the doves and the wolves from the
[sheep.

Digitized by Google

Very oft, to beginnings for grandeur unmatched,
One or two flashy fragments are awkwardly patched,
For the purpose of making a show this is done—
It succeeds, but the show is a ludicrous one.
From the top of Olympus where thunder-clouds frown,
On a spiritless pinion the muse flutters down,
Then flies to the shady retreats of the grove
To hide from the presence of all-seeing Jove,
With a modesty greater but vainer than Eve's,
For her nakedness shows through the kirtle of leaves.
Or else she aspiringly puts forth her power
To catch at the ribbon that binds up the shower—
That is, at the rainbow, which fades in a wink,
Like the best of its glories when painted in ink.

One more illustration : The fault to my mind,
Is like that of a potter who, having designed
And started to model a five-gallon jug,
Keeps tapering off till he turns out a mug,—
A vessel in which we can never confide,
For its heart is too small, and its mouth is too wide.
Now this is the moral—your subject should suit
Your abilities first, be they grand or minute ;
Then your poem will take with the public, no doubt,
If 'tis uniform, pointed and simple throughout.

There remains for most poets a great source of bother ;
By shunning one fault, we fall into another.
Now I often strive to come right to the point,
But as oft, put some metrical foot out of joint.
Another one aims at grace, smoothness and ease
And lands on stupidity's lowest degrees ;

Digitized by Google

While a third may attempt the sublime and the vast,
And sink out of sight in a stream of bombast.
Whoever is bound to produce something rare
To make all his readers in wonderment stare,
Will portray you a dolphin at sport 'mong the trees
And a herd of wild boars roaming over the seas.
Care cannot atone for the absence of skill
But unperceived blunders will hamper you still.

Yet sometimes a poet egregiously fails
By exhausting his skill upon minor details,
When the trifles appear overloaded with art
At the glaring expense of some weightier part.
A sculptor, at work on the marble so hard,
If he mind not proportion, resembles that bard.
On the block without form his commencement is fair,
Imitating from life every curl of the hair,
And making, with asinine instinct, appear
The fine convolutions that lurk in the ear;
Yet going astray from the rules of proportion,
His work is a monster, if not an abortion:
The features ill-formed, or but poorly assorted,
A soulless expression, a posture distorted,
The figure thrown into that elegant pose
Of the shape set in cornfields to frighten the crows;
A goblin sufficiently horrid to scare
The scavenger-birds which but darken the air,
Then who can describe how the effigy harrows
The fluttering souls of the dear little sparrows?
Remarkable beauty all eyes will attract,—
A remarkable blemish the same way will act;

Digitized by Google

Yet I'd rather be gazed at and theme for remark
On account of my eyes being piercingly dark,
Than to be mid a mixed crowd of friends and of foes,
Conspicuous but for my prominent nose.

If your genius would shine like a new farthing candle,
Your theme should be one you can easily handle;
Then ponder it duly and cogitate deep
And long, never giving your eye-lids to sleep
Till you have in your mind, all as clear as the day,
The least little image that comes into play;
Thus you ne'er will be brought to the end of your wits
In search of some phrase or expression that fits.

The only legitimate way to secure
A style that is beautiful, pleasing and pure—
Unless I am greatly one side of my text—
Is to bind every thought to the one that comes next
All witty conceits that come into your head
But have no connection with what is just said,
Though still kept in view, put them off till the time
When reason demands them as well as the rhyme.

The author of verse that is fit to be heard
Will be almost fastidious in choosing each word.
The counterfeit jingle his ear must detect
Before he can properly choose and reject.
The rule must be absolute: put 'neath your feet
The cant of the clubs and the slang of the street;
And though words of your coining had better be few,
Make the old ones, if possible, shine as if new:

Digitized by Google

IN EXILE.

As the exile may wistfully gaze o'er the ocean
That rolls between him and the land he holds dear,
And forget, in that moment of rising emotion,
The thoughts that oppress him by being too near.

So when dreams, as if bright from some former existence
That had in this dull state of being no part,
Crowd on me from out the unspeakable distance,
The things of to-day cannot enter my heart.

SONG.

What warring thoughts disturb my rest
Two wishes may reveal :
That you were mine, or that this breast
Were tempered hard as steel.

The strong emotions that arise
No promise bring to me,
But only waste themselves in sighs
For that which ne'er can be.

Whatever joy our loves impart
'Tis not unmixed with pain ;
For nothing soothes the restless heart
Where every hope is vain.

And yet to chide the dream away
Would give a pang more deep,
As flowers which languish 'neath the day
At day's departure weep.

Digitized by Google

A FEAST OF FAT THINGS.

AN ALLEGORY.

THE tailors made a feast one day
As gay as gay can be ;
And ninety-nine sat down to dine
On the ham of a roasted flea.

Now when they had discussed the feast
They felt their legs grow nimble ;
The ninety-nine poured out their wine
And drank it from a thimble.

Then full of music in themselves,
Without the violin's tweedle,
The ninety-nine danced on the fine
Steel point of a cambric needle.

When night was somewhat past its noon
They did the curtain draw ;
And the ninety-nine slept all in a line
Upon a single straw.

But in the middle of their dreams
A mouse beside them plumped ;
The ninety-nine asked aid divine
And through the key-hole jumped !

Digitized by Google

NOVA SCOTIA.

O LAND of the mayflower and birch
Where my sires paid their homage to God
What time neither schoolhouse or church
Bestudded the wilderness broad,

With Britain supreme in their thought,
They heeded no danger nor toil;
And the tenderest affection they brought
Took root in thy stoniest soil.

How simple, how few the delights
They found in this tenantless coast;
Yet the land of Arabian Nights
Not deeper contentment could boast.

They faced with a Puritan psalm
The roughest encounters of life,
And bore in their bosoms a calm
Through the winds and the waters at strife.

Their shades may look down from above
Forgiving the worst I have done;
But the moment I fail thee in love
Let them curse their degenerate son.

Though winter may scowl on thee rude
And summer be fickle at times,
Thy children, with vigor endued,
Never envy the sun-gilded climes.

Digitized by Google

And wherever distinction is sought,
Though boldly and widely they roam,
Their sweetest and holiest thought
Is when they are dreaming of home.

Of the pure azure sky overhead,
Of the close-knitted sward 'neath the feet,—
Of the glistening waters outspread—
Has earth any picture more sweet?

Of the fragrance afloat on the breeze
When daylight began to decline,
Of the hand that it thrilled you to squeeze—
Has heaven any joy more divine?

Ah no! to the end of my days,
Though I stray to the ends of the earth,
My song and my prayer and my praise
Shall be for the land of my birth.

I behold thee when fairest thou art
With a lover's devotion and pride,
And the climate ne'er changes the heart
Ever warm with a patriot tide.

E'en the deep's unmelodious tunes,
When the crags with the storm-echoes rang,
Always had the brave dash of the runes
That Thorfinn, saluting thee, sang.

Neither title nor lordly domain
With vassalage cumbers thy soil,
But the forest, the mine and the plain
Present thee the tribute of toil.

Digitized by Google

And here where the storm-braving cape
 Reaches out its white arms to the sea,
Old Proteus puts on the shape
 Of a ministering angel to thee.

Since Delos called over the deep
 To the farthest Ionian glen,
Even life has been reckoned more cheap
 Than honor, with maritime men.

Nova Scotia, the home of the fair
 As well as the land of the brave,
Those bards fable not who declare
 That Venus is born of the wave.

Dear land, may the years as they roll
 Still view thy just fortunes increase,
Placed under no harsher control
 Than that which give freedom and peace.

And may thy inherited tongue
 Which encircles this planet with fame,
In leaving no virtue unsung,
 With its trinmphs commingle thy name.

Digitized by Google

SONG.

I.

And didst thou think I could forget
Or lightly hold the past?
No—till my latest sun shall set
One mem'ry fond must last.

II.

'Tis of a visionary dream
That blest my gayest hours,
But vanished like the solar beam
When some black tempest lowers.

III.

If only I had cause to mourn,
I might have found relief,
But severed hearts have ne'er outworn
The sense of mutual grief.

IV.

It haunts me 'mid the faithless crowd,
And when I'm all alone;
And even in my laughter loud,
I start to hear its tone.

V.

The glow of early passion o'er
Has left a withered trace,
Time never can the one restore,—
The other ne'er efface.

Digitized by Google

THE CONTRAST.

THOUGH I mingle with all that is mirthful and bright,
I am treading the wine-press alone;
And the bubbles are dancing delusively light
O'er a heart that is heavy as stone.

How painful the cup, blushing warm to the brim,
Contrasts with the colorless lips!
Its sparkle relumes not a world that is dim
'Neath a darkly-foreboding eclipse.

Yet calmly the two-fold affliction I bear
When the happy around me rejoice;
It rends me to stifle the groan of despair
And to counterfeit merriment's voice.

O God! 'tis the bottomless bathos of woe
When the hour, that should offer relief
To a life of depression, is false in its show
And increases the burden of grief!

But small is the aid that repining can bring,
Let me set my teeth hard and defy
The damnably double-edged torture to wring
From its victim a tear or a sigh.

Digitized by Google

CHATTERTON S PICTURE.

That marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride.—*Wordsworth.*

THOSE features bear no stamp of grief,
No token that this world's annoy
Had fastened on so fair a leaf
Its infant promise to destroy.

And yet sharp misery effaced
That beauty, tender as a girl's,
Ere time, with all his envious haste,
Had touched the wealth of graceful curls.

O genius in its brightest blaze
Too early quenched! The pitying tears
That consecrate this moment's gaze
Outnumber far his sum of years.

Clear-visioned boy of passions blind,
It cannot make men love him less
To search their colder hearts and find
What gave his own its bitterness.

Volcanic bursts of feeling shook
All, all but mad ungoverned pride
Which settled to that savage look
By death forever petrified.

O ruin lamentably rash
Presaged in many a line of fire,
As meteors through the heavens flash
The light which dooms them to expire!

Digitized by Google

REFLECTIONS OF FAUST.

THRICE welcome twilight, soft and sweet!
Along yon distant grassy slope
Romance might stray with eager feet
Bright with the dews of hope.

But thou, from passion long estranged,
What brings thee to this sacred spot?
Unhappy Faust! thou art so changed
I recognise thee not.

The mighty breath of love has mixed
Thy sky with dead emotion's dust.
Gods! is the mind I deemed so fixed
The sport of every gust?

What frailty rules in every state!
A village maid I chance to meet—
The heart which would not bend to fate
Bows down even at her feet!

* * * * *

Could that to me one pleasure bring
Which caused a guileless being shame?
For am I not that cursed thing,
Without repose, without an aim,
Which, like the torrent, to and fro
Is bounding to the abyss below?

Digitized by Google

And she, the innocent and pure,
Who sheltered in this valley, dwells
Within her little world secure,
Though near to where the torrent swells—

Could I, abhorred of man and heaven,
Invade her happy dwelling-place,
And all its peace forever riven,
Plunge her in misery and disgrace?

Help, devil! lend your influence,
Whate'er the end, it cannot be
Worse than this terrible suspense—
Ruin to her or death to me!

A ROMAN MODEL.

HORACE, who lived a thousand years or so
Before the date of spelling-books and rhyme,
In a most pleasing picture lets us know
How schools were managed in that olden time.
When Roman urchins, yet too weak to climb
The tree of knowledge, sat and sucked their thumbs,
The bland preceptor, working on the prime
Incentive whence all human effort comes,
Coaxed out their latent taste with sugar-cake and plums!

Digitized by Google

The world's young conquerors, on their patent slates—
Those tiny poplar slabs rubbed smooth with wax—
Then formed their *tu's* and *sicce's*, *aut's* and *ait's*
Without the pressure of a grinding tax,
Without the stimulus of constant whacks;
For rods were things as yet that only served
To lash the handle of the lictor's axe,
Yet not one tyro from his tablet swerved
And not a rule was broke and not a spine was curved.

Dear nature tutors not with birchen twigs;
The chubby Flaccus* in his leafy nook,
Where stock-doves strewed his sleep with myrtle-sprigs,
Learned wonders from the universal book.
And then young Maro, with his maiden look,
At morn conversing with the oaks and rills,
Or piping till the hazel copses shook
With tremulous joy to hear his graceful trills—
Oh, give me such a field, and take your Seven Hills!

These are the days of culture and of art
Wherein we make a pictured paper prize
The object of ambition from the start,
For which the aspirant must sacrifice
His native freshness and his natural eyes,
And take his view of things through Laurance' lenses—
A sad mistake, which he will realise
When the vain building of a life commences
On ten half-sciences and only four poor senses.

* Quintus Horatius Flaccus and Publius Virgilius Maro are known to English readers by their Frenchified names of Horace and Virgil respectively.

Digitized by Google

How oft the regent of a brazen globe
On the hard pan of human dulness toils
With patience near akin to that of Job
When sore beleaguered by a host of boils.
But all that learning's dry machinery oils
He rigorously places under ban
And his young charge methodically spoils
On Wordsworth's—or somebody else's plan—
Maintaining that "the child is father to the man."

And so he strives to make its head turn gray,
But will the little slips mature the faster
For being compelled to sit six hours a day
Just like their grandsires—cut in alabaster?
I tell you nay. The prim, pretentious master,
So slow to comprehend, so dull to feel,
Would best be placed where he could teach the Shaster,
And see the sucklings by fanatic zeal
Thrown out to Jagarnath and crushed beneath his
[wheel!

Digitized by Google

ODE TO PANDORA.

O LOVELY prototype of all
Who murder with the eye,
Which, if it pierce not like a ball,
Most fatally can pry ;

When Vulcan forged the pretty box
In which thy gifts were hid,
He should have furnished double locks
To fasten down the lid.*

But thou didst wantonly unpack
Disease's baleful train,
All aches and ills that cramp and rack
The limbs, the heart, the brain.

And in the most persistent shapes
They spread, increase and rage ;
There's scarcely one in ten escapes
In this progressive age.

They love the loftiest of the race,—
'Tis proved beyond a doubt
By many a dignitary's pace
Undignified by gout.

*In the Greek fable, the gods sent presents to Pandora, with strict injunctions not to open the box containing them. Overcome by curiosity, she disobeyed orders, and thus let loose all the evils which have since afflicted mankind.

Digitized by Google

Yet thy pernicious brood of ills,
Diffused through earth and air,
To antidotal drugs and pills
Is but a small affair.

The city walls, the desert stones
Bear testimony true,
And monumental piles of bones
Might rise in witness, too.

Pandora, nullify thy curse
By this one saving clause:
Shut every quack within a hearse
And win the world's applause!

STORM-STANZAS.

Let the pedant pore over the page scientific,
Or seek his delight in some angular form;
But oh! let me study that grand hieroglyphic
That's writ in the stars and pronounced by the storm.

Away with the lessons of midnight instilling
Exhausting the soul as the lamp glimmers low!
Let me take my instruction all vivid and thrilling
From Nature's own volume, and feel what I know.

In the tameness of quiet, thought languishes idly
Beneath the dull weight of mortality's shroud,
But excited, it flashes as fiercely and widely
As Jove's awful shafts from the dark-rolling cloud.

Digitized by Google

Then the rage of the tempest has wild fascination
Which danger and solitude only enhance ;
The elements utter that mute exultation
Which swells in the bosom and glows in the glance.

For this, I have oft on the lonely shore wandered,
And visions of grandeur stole over me then,—
A clearer conception of what I had pondered
And longed for in vain when surrounded by men.

TO C. F. McWHORTER,

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA.

Long may these happy missives tell
My trusty friend is hale and well,
And deep in philosophic dream
Still musing on that rapid stream,
Which frets the Alleghanies' side
And swells Ohio's yellow tide.
Though when the Democrats are in
He joins the conclave's roaring din ;
Or, like the moth, is bound to gnaw
His way through bulky tomes of law,
He still can fan that sparkling wit
Which nature in his bosom lit,
For higher use than idle show—
To cheer a friend and blast a foe.

Digitized by Google

Some cynics always try to mar
The reputation of the bar,
And now in anger, now in sport,
Exhibit their contempt of court
And men who cultivate the knack
Of arguing that white is black.
But hear me hurl that falsehood back!
Themselves the slanderer's brand must bear
While I can quote your record fair.
Whatever may that record sully
When you have donned the robe of Tully,
I hold you now, as in the past,
A soul of most heroic cast,
Since all those sportive nymphs that glide
Along the Elk's romantic side
Your modest steps could not decoy
To match them in their wanton joy,
Or pledge them in the flowing cup
Which conjures frolic spirits up.

* * * * * * *

From birth to death we scarcely know
How much to friendship's power we owe.
But were it once from earth expunged,
In what a gloom we should be plunged!
Our hearts would be, like monkish oysters,
Sealed tight in hard calcareous cloisters;
Our warmest thoughts would freeze to stone
Within a moral frigid zone;
Our lives would stagnate to a lake
From which no streams in gladness break,

Digitized by Google

The muse would lose her tenor note
And have a very tuneless throat.

'Tis not in festive hours alone
That friendship's highest aid is known ;
But when on life's tempestuous wave
Where storms of adverse fortune rave,
When all a-wreck, the last faint hope
Is clinging to a parting rope,
Then flows its genial current warm
To help us safely through the storm.
So some tall ship from England late
To Boston bound with costly freight,
Arrived in Nova Scotian seas
What time the coast begins to freeze,
Encounters furious northern gales
That snap her spars and split her sails,
Till rudderless and from her course
Blown southward by the tempest's force,
She meets the Gulf-stream's tepid tides
That free her ice-encumbered sides,
And then, refitted mast and stay,
She bravely bears upon her way,
And soon, though battered, still a ship
Triumphant o'er the dangerous trip,
No more of winds and waves the sport,
She anchors in the destined port.

Yet there is one thing far above
The name of friendship—youthful love,
Which, strong, spontaneous, high and pure,
Must live while soul and sense endure.

Digitized by Google

The chiefest bliss of mortal life
Is nearing your embrace—a wife !
While heaven approves the rapturous union
Of two fond hearts in close communion,
A brother of the gentle craft
His blessing from afar may waft.

* * * * * * *

May thriving offspring, more or less,
The dear connubial bondage bless.
And as in sylvan haunts I've seen
An aged tree yet strong and green,
While growing from it fibrous roots
Sprang up innumerable shoots,
And clustering round on every side,
Enshrined it in paternal pride ;
So may your progeny like them
Long flourish 'round the parent stem.

Digitized by Google

LARK-SONG.

As a lark on the billowy breezes uplifted,
Forgets the dull cage that so dismally long
Cramped the vigor of pinion wherewith he was gifted
And tarnished his plumage and stifled his song;

So I, since the fortunate moment recalled me
From tasks ever hated, at liberty soar;
And the things which like fetters but yesterday galled me
Are flung to the winds and remembered no more.

Necessity—stern and inflexible jailer—
Has kept me too long and too stringently cooped,
Where the eye growing dimmer, the cheek growing paler
Proclaimed how the spirit continually drooped.

O freedom! thou primitive maid of the mountain,
Thou art not confined to the land of thy birth.
The river stays not at the play of the fountain,
But widens and wanders to gladden the earth.

Not the walls of a harem long time should confine me,
Though filled with the loveliest ensnarers of men;
To such a mere phantom the sameness would pine me,
I'd slip through the key-hole to freedom again.

Digitized by Google

TO HARRIET BEECHER-STOWE.

ON THE PUBLICATION OF HER INFAMOUS BYRON LIBEL.

My Shakspere's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest.—*Tennyson.*

THOUGH fiction wear angelic grace
When in the service of the slave,
Oh keep the pigment of its face
From off the hero-poet's grave!

His hand proud freedom's flag unfurled—
Himself the mark for blight and blame.
She yet shall wave around the world
Her banner blazoned with his name.

And you once nobly urged the cause
That to the serf his right restored;
You spoke the thrilling word which draws—
Or drew—the tear, if not the sword.

When, from the battle-clouds that blazed,
The blast of freedom cleared the skies,
How many Hagars blessed and praised
The angel in the eagle's guise.

But you are not the bird of prey
That bathes in solar light its wing
And thunders through the liquid way
To pounce upon some living thing.

Digitized by Google

No—you are of the buzzard brood
That trails a dusk plume o'er the plain
And ever deems that festering food
The choicest which has longest lain!

You cannot rend these two apart,
For both to Byron's fame belong—
The true nobility of heart,
The grandeur of impassioned song.

You should have wielded, by his side,
The potent wand of English speech
To part the modern Red Sea tide
That all the promised land might reach.

Happy his early death which sent
Regret even through the hostile throng;
Wretched the life, however spent,
Which lasts a single day too long.

For one and all, whose tender age
You taught to hate the callous breast,
Must feel your last and loathsome page
Has deeply sullied all the rest.

The stain is dark. The mousing owl
Might imp its wing to tear his wreath;
But oh! the ghoulish deed to prowl
And burrow for the dust beneath!

The public odium and the ban,
If justice live, must light on you.
'Twas well to preach that man is man—
Shall woman not be woman too?

Digitized by Google

And slander, though it widely roam,
Is certain to return at last,
Like vagrant chickens coming home:
Even now it travels homeward fast.

'Tis strange—but I have heard or read
Of visiting a heinous sin
Not only on the guilty head
But on the third and fourth of kin.

The fates, who seldom judge amiss,
Avenge Parnassus on the church
And bid a shady Nemesis
Upon the Brooklyn steeple perch.

APATHES.

This world is full of creatures
With apathy's dull seal
Upon their very features,
Which shows their hearts ne'er feel
The warmth of kindlier natures
For others, woe or weal.

The greed of gain encumbers
Their days and nights with care;
Their stolid fancy slumbers
As doth the wintering bear;
The most enchanting numbers
Awake no echoes there.

Digitized by Google

Oft have I seen them shining
In fashion's trapping decked,
Seen empty heads inclining
To them in deep respect,
While modest worth was pining
In want and cold neglect.

THE BROOK.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

Thou brooklet, silver-bright and clear,
That boundest on in glad career,
What wondrous hand thy channel traced
And whence and whither dost thou haste?

From nooks that never saw the sun,
O'er moss and matted flowers I run;
And when in dreaminess I rest,
All heaven is mirrored in my breast.

Then joyous freedom bids me speed.
know not wither it may lead.
But he who cleft through rocks my way,
Will be my guide where'er I stray.

Digitized by Google

THE FIELD-FLOWER.

Behold, by the peasant's shoon untrod,
The delicate field-flower blowing.
It is knitted fast to the stainful sod,
But it fills its cup from the firmament broad,
And draws its hues from the light of God
Through the boundless æther flowing.

And so the uplifted heart that strives
For the purer modes of existence.
It is fastened here 'mid the lowly lives
Where the ivy creeps and the cockle thrives;
But its color and fragrance it derives
From the height and the depth and the distance.

NOVEMBER SONG.

I.

Night winds of November,
How dreary they whistle!
The leaves are all dead;
The birds are all fled,
And the light-sailing down
Has all flown from the thistle.

Digitized by Google

II.

In the hedges and gardens
No red rose is growing;
But one keeps awake—
And all for my sake—
In the rosiest hues
Of expectancy glowing.

III.

Oh why cannot love
Make this happy night longer?
The morning that parts
Our close-beating hearts
Is neither the sweeter,
The brighter, nor stronger.

A MODERN MAXIM.

It sadly deranges one's business plans
To admire the Lord's handiwork rather than man's.

Then lift not your eyes with the heavens to converse,
But grope on the ground for you might find a purse.

Digitized by Google

*THE CLYDE.**

HAMILTON'S FARM, AUG. 14, 1888.

I.

How softly steals adown the glade
The crystal Clyde,
While alternating light and shade,
Like the changeful glance of a winsome maid
Play o'er its tide!

II.

Here Summer, dainty rural queen
Of all the globe,
Draws round her haunts a leafy screen,
With this silver thread through the silken green—
Her royal robe.

III.

Pure when the dewy eastern skies
Are flushed, yet calm;
Fair when the noon supinely lies,
And sweet when the lilies close their eyes
And breathe their balm.

IV.

Ah me! the sunny hours are fleet,
But you are here;
And since its banks have kissed your feet,
Clyde shall be pure and fair and sweet
Through all the year.

*A small stream in Shelburne county, about thirteen miles from Barrington. There is some fine scenery on its banks, especially at the place called Hamilton's Farm.

Digitized by Google

EPITAPH

ON CAPT. POTTER, OF HULL, G. B.

THE market rose and the mercury fell
At the death of Captain Potter.
'Twas a cold day for him when he went to *Hull*
For his temper was ten times hotter!

WHEREFORE.

WHY like the heron's stilted brood
Are the men of shelves and tills?
Perhaps because they get their food
By means of their lengthy bills.

THE PACHYDERMS.

ONCE the bard, stern justice dealing,
Held the mightiest rogues in check.
Now they seem devoid of feeling
Save perhaps about the neck.

One is ignorant altogether
If he understandeth not
That the old Behemoth's leather
Will resist the sharpest shot.

Fusilade the alligator
Basking on the reedy Nile,
And the Nubian nutmeg-grater
Mocks you with a hideous smile.

Digitized by Google

SONG.

COME, dearest, come out to the gate,
To your sweet little promise be true.
The bird nestles down with its mate,
And I am still waiting for you.

I marked, as the sun set this eve,
How his rays did your window adorn,
As if he were taking fond leave
Of the fairest and best, till the morn.

No land now enjoying his beams
Can boast of a treasure so fair
As the shadowy region of dreams
Contains when your image is there.

Come, my rosy-cheeked, violet-eyed muse,
With a beauty surpassing the day
When it blends with the loveliest hues
The delicate odors of May!

Digitized by Google

PARTING.

Vale dulcis, vale cara,
Hora venit nunc amara!

FARE thee well! This bitter hour
Claims me with malignant power!
I have been the roving bee,
Thou, the only flower for me;
All the past a summer noon,
Golden-bright, but fled too soon.

Ah! I could not keep my eyes
On the ever-changing skies,
But, enchanted to the spot,
Lapse of time I heeded not
Till, for safety all too late,
Storm and darkness seal my fate!

DISAPPOINTMENT.

RELENTLESS tamer of our pride,
Stern chastener of our lives,
Who dost not lay the frown aside
While vanity survives,—
'Tis thine when, pleasing to the view,
Arise the forms of tempting hue
For which ambition strives,—
'Tis thine the onward course to bar,
Or scatter the delusion far.

Digitized by Google

There is no state attained by man
 Which thou mayest not invade
And mock the most sagacious plan
 By human wisdom laid;
In every prospect and pursuit
Are blossoms that produce no fruit,
 For at thy touch they fade.
Of common clay thou dost convince
Alike the peasant and the prince.

The great, who seemingly controlled
 The nations' destiny,
Have seen their power relax its hold
 And bow to thy decree.
And oh! the lowly heirs of toil,
Thou sparest not their hopes to spoil,
 For all are doomed to see
Some pleasure, deemed almost possessed,
Evanishing at thy behest.

But all unlovely as thou art,
 Thou comest to undeceive
And teach aright the erring heart,
 Too ready to believe,—
To raise and rectify the will,
Armed with a nobler purpose still
 Its mission to achieve,
Ere wooed by pleasure's siren song
And led irrevocably wrong.

Digitized by Google

Then peace, sad heart, time is not now
For thee to break or faint.
Recall the shadow from the brow,
And hush the fond complaint;
For still the quenchless soul aspires
Above the ashes of desires
That leave a mortal taint;
And, grown familiar with despair,
Though keen to feel, can strongly bear.

The sapling pine, when round are strewn
The ruins of the year,
Is rudely tossed but not o'erblown
By winter howling drear,
And though benumbing frosts have chilled
The genial life its veins that filled,
Its branches are not sere,
And there again shall music ring
When milder skies restore the spring.

SONNETS.

I.—THE TRUE POET.

He was the bard who, as the impulse grew,
Upraised his piercing eye and brow august—
Least dimmed, least sullied by the sordid dust—
And compassed with a clear, exalted view
The heavenly and the human. Thence he drew
All images of noble, pure and just
Within harmonious bond: a sacred trust
To teach his race and virtuous life renew.

Digitized by Google

How sad, whene'er his brave perverted powers
The argument divine do not sustain,
But, all enamored of earth's poisonous flowers,
Imbibe and then diffuse the moral bane!
O thou bright goddess! in his maddest hours,
Thy humblest votary from such deed restrain.

II.—FRANCESCO PETRARCA.

I BOAST not that he taught me how to sing,
Or trill the sonnet's full symphonious chime,
For that sweet nursling of the Ausonian clime
Still shuns the harshness of a Gothic string.
Yet, if I may the grateful tribute bring,
It was the flushing of his summer time,
Instinct with love and resonant with rhyme,
That added warmth to my late northern spring.
The gloomy firs, that with the tempest roar,
Seem myrtles gay by amorous breezes fanned
If love be ripening in the bosom's core.
In race, in speech and time so far apart,
The Tuscan's strain I more than understand,—
It sets to music every passionate heart!

III.—TWENTY-FIVE.

STUPENDOUS thought! that since my life begun,
This rolling sphere, where no men long abide,
Where night and day the struggling hours divide,
Has sped so many times around the sun!
Not so unerringly my life has run,
Careless of steerage but of lookout wide,
That has perchance some distant realms descried,
Not patent to the gaze of every one.

Digitized by Google

In retrospect, some sad emotions rise,
Unmixed with fruitless longings to return.
No puerile fears possess me ; though my eyes,
Clearer than aught beside, this truth discern
That the vast flood whereon I sail or drift
Becomes more violent as the tide grows swift.

IV.—TO THE SERVIANS, 1877.

On Servians ! in the name of Czerni George,
Who fell by treason's foullest, darkest scheme,
Beneath whose banner, like a stormful stream,
Your hardy sires poured down the mountain gorge !
Strike ! for the chains your Moslem masters forge
Both shame your manhood and your faith blaspheme,
And, howsoever bearable they seem,
Their lightest links cut deeper than the sword.
Your call to arms should ring through Europe's sky—
A trumpet giving no uncertain sound,
Down with that fierce, aggressive Koreish lie !
It shall not take deep root on Grecian ground,
It must not lift its waning moon as high
As that brave standard patriots rally round !

V.—ASPIRATION.

Ay, though no other hand in all the earth
Attempt the lyre with such discordant sound
And themes so lowly, thereto am I bound
With feelings strong as are the ties of birth.
Would heaven they showed not such a wintry dearth
Of high and good ; but oft the cause is found
Not in the tree but in the sterile ground
That renders fruitage scant or little worth.

Digitized by Google

The olive, sage Athene's gift of yore,
Was but but the veriest wilding of the waste
Till, nurtured on the genial Attic shore,
The temples of the immortal gods it graced.
Oh might one wreath of mine—I ask no more—
Be for the honor of my country placed!

VI.—L'AMORE E L'AMICIZIA.

(*Sent to the Author by a Friend.*)

Lorchè del serpe ai lusinghieri accenti
Eva diè ascolto, ed il fatale frutto
Gustò, una atroce eredità di lutto
Preparó dessa alle future genti.
O colpa pregno d'infiniti stenti
Per cui fu condannato il mondo tutto
Agli affanni e alla morte e fu condutto
Ai sospiri, ai pianti ed ai lamenti!
Ma sulla terra, si misera, volse
L'Eterno un sguardo dal celeste trono,
E pietade di lei nel seno accolse:
Ed a sollievo d'un stato si rio,
D'amore e d'amicizia le fé dono,
Per cui il mortal più s'assomiglia a Dio.

VII.—LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

(*Translation of the foregoing Sonnet.*)

When the dire snake's delusive speech prevailed
And guileless Eve partook the fruit forbid,
A rueful heritage within it hid
Was then on all the future race entailed.

Digitized by Google

O fault, throughout eternity bewailed!
Disaster that the infant world undid,
While pain and death, all-conquering, stalked amid
Sighs, tears and groans which the dread triumph hailed.
Yet on the earth, so wretched 'neath the stroke,
The Eternal looked from his celestial throne
And in her plea divinest pity spoke.
Then first, to mitigate the afflictive rod,
Were given her love and friendship as her own,
By which the mortal most resembles God.

VIII.—TO CAPT. H. C. MCWHORTER, VIRGINIA, U. S.

O FRIEND, with whom I had full many a ramble,
And pleasant converse, on Kanawha's bank—
Screened from the ardent noon by willows dank,
Or in retreats close-fenced by flowering bramble,
Where moonlit fairies undisturbed might gambol—
Your voice and arm were in the foremost rank
To bid vile slavery's chain no longer clank
In mockery of that charter's grand preamble.
Since, nobly merited, the people's trust
Calls you in legislative sphere to move,
You will not only hold that axiom just,
But by a living demonstration prove
That, though all men are equal by their birth,
Virtue alone confers superior worth.*

* Les hommes sont égaux; ce n'est pas la naissance,
C'est la vertu seule qui fait la différence.—*Voltaire.*

Digitized by Google

IX.—FRANCESCO'S LOST LOVE.

O DARK devouring earth! I envy thee
The treasure clasped within thy cold embrace!
That loving form and that excelling grace,
Which I no more, oh! nevermore shall see!
heaven, where, ever pure and free—
As angels are from any mortal trace,
Her happy spirit glads the holy place
That seems so inaccessible to me.
I envy all the sainted throng who share
Her company and hear her sweetly speak—
That seraph voice which I so sadly miss!
But most I envy death the pleasure rare
Of feasting on so delicate a cheek,
From which my lips have taken the farewell kiss.

X.—MIDNIGHT.

Stille
Ruhn oben die Sterne und unten die Gräber.—*Goethe.*

TIS the dark hour, whose touch has often froze
Life's pulsing fount. Dear God! I cannot sleep.
I think upon those cruel wounds and deep
From whence the healing of the nations flows.
"He giveth his beloved sleep." They close
Their eyes in peace while I must wake and weep.
The stars, the graves unpitying silence keep:
I plead in vain—the black air gasps, Who knows?
Oh yet the heart recoils with shuddering chill,
As vivid thought forecasts the fatal term
And shows the clay, mute, pallid, cold and still!
How soon, how sad! And can the vital germ
Survive the worlds eternal space that fill?—
Oh let them pass, but let my faith be firm!

Digitized by Google

XI.—DESPAIR.

THOU art not all ungracious, wan despair;
Although I cannot love the downcast eye,
From long acquaintance I can testify
That that no deception ever lurketh there.
Beauty is false at heart, or does but wear
An evanescent lustre; riches fly;
Ambition falters when the goal is nigh,
And friendship varies like our northern air.
But thou, who didst impress my early years,
Through every change, art faithful to me yet;
And this I owe thee, that no craven fears
Can daunt me now, whatever ills beset.
Thine is the wisdom pleasure's pampered dears
Can never learn, nor misery's sons forget.

XII.—RESIGNATION.

O MOTHER earth! to thee I bend my eyes
Aching and blinded with their tearful quest.
I beg thy cold heart for eternal rest,
For thine is not the worm that never dies.
Behold how helpless thy lost offspring lies!
Behold his hot and wasted cheek is pressed
Close to thy frosty, unresponsive breast
In agony which mocks the suppliant's cries!
Bid the delirious struggle cease—I yield
And strive no longer—passive and resigned
To meet the worst that fate may hold concealed:—
No hopes, no fears, no will.—But lo! I find
As quick as light, that the great grief is healed
And perfect calm pervades the rescued mind!

Digitized by Google

XIII.—SANTA SELVA.

O DIM-AISLED wood! no pillared fane so grand,
So sacred in the old luxurious East
When cushioned kingship knelt before the priest
In all the pomp at tyranny's command!
This place is for a loftier worship planned:
The rites mysterious and the solemn feast
Are in their purity where bird and beast
Bleed not, but feed from nature's bounteous hand.
Hence, ye profane ones! This is holy ground,
Where through each quickened sense we may imbibe
The balm, the bloom that make the sick heart sound.
A thousand leaves here spread their knowledge free,—
All undistorted by the meddling scribe,
All unperverted by the Pharisee.

XIV.—THE DEAD PRINCE.

[My regret at the tragic death of the young French adventurer, killed by the Zulus, June, 1878. was genuine, and for that reason alone, I have retained this sonnet, written at the time. My views concerning princes and republics have since become greatly modified.]

MOURN for the imperial soldier-son of France!
But never can barbarian gore atone
For that high blood. All nations, even his own,
May well lament blind war's accurst mischance!
Yet rests the red stain of this sad romance,
Not on the savage assegai alone,
But on the edict which against his throne
And birthright sternly bent the civil lance.

Digitized by Google

Capricious land, divided to deny
Thy prince the hope he now surrendereth,
Unite once more ; his banishment is by ;
He rules thee in the majesty of death—
More hearts are moved by his expiring sigh
Than by the proud republic's living breath !

XV.—TO THE CITY OF HALIFAX.

She sits not in the splendor of renown
Nor girt with grandeur, like some cities old,
Nor teeming wide with multitudes untold,
Yet prestige gathers to her granite crown
That daunts invasion with a thunderous frown ;
While, mantled 'neath the British banner's fold,
For higher triumph and with fearless hold,
Peace waves the olive o'er our mother-town.
Nor shall she from that better contest shrink
That calls the vigorous mind, the skilful hand
To forge in history's chain the brightest link :
The keen-eyed genius of my native land
Still fosters on this noble haven's brink
Such hearts as filled Cornwallis' pioneer band.

XVI.—TO MISS ———.

Du bist mir nah und doch so fern.

Veil not that glance beneath the tender lid ;
For in the azure of those queenly eyes—
The rarest dowry of indulgent skies—
I still adore what my repose nndid.

Digitized by Google

With your dear image in my bosom hid,
The secret of our mutual passion lies,
Which time, nor change, the less has made me prize,
Nor cold discretion from its place has chid.
Ah! ne'er again, as heretofore, we meet;
Yet life is not all cheerless and forlorn,
While oft our fervent looks each other greet,
As zephyr greets the blushing rose at morn;
Full light he passess, but her spirit sweet,
Caught all unseen, away with him is borne.

XVII.—GRANDEZZA.

Deh! foss' io qualche cosa nello stato
Ove si mostra una sontuosa festa,
Mentre la Nuova Scozia é tutta mesta,
Almen sarei dal gregge mio lodato.
Quale un tauro, di notte errando in prato,
A l'orto viene, e colla sua testa
Crollar fa sasso e legno e non s'arresta
Finch'abbia ognuno frutto e fior mangiato:
Cosi, talor, fanno i più degni eroi—
Il paladin Giovanni e il gran Topero—
Capaci a spoliar il Canada e poi
Rubare questo nobil emispero;
Ma tuttavolta, viengo innanzi a voi,
Sprezzando l'opere del serpe nero.

XVIII.—TO A YOUNG LADY.

How rarely are those precious gifts combined—
The playful wit and the exalted thought,
Staid wisdom's look on brows so smoothly wrought,
Like flower and fruitage in one wreath entwined.

Digitized by Google

From such united charms of form and mind
Methinks the Grecian sages must have caught
Their brightest inspiration, when they taught
That loveliest spirits loveliest lodgements find.
Some happy planet blessed your natal hour
With light to cheer misfortune's cloudy days,
Changing, by charity's benignant power,
The voice of sadness to the note of praise;
As when, uprisen from the crushing shower,
New beauty blossoms in the vernal rays.

XIX.—THE SAFEST GUIDE.

No star was lighted in the shivering air;
All round was dark as woods at night can be;
And the trees laid their ghostly hands on me,
As wondering whether mortal ventured there.
My thoughts were all within me, clustering where
The blessed dews of human sympathy
Had fallen and refreshed abundantly
What late had been a desert parched and bare.
And I passed onward, though the path was lost—
A blackened maze—unto a place secure,
Nor could discern what served me as a guide.
So have I learned—but ah, what pain it cost!—
That reason's day cannot my steps assure
Like love's encheering whisper by my side.

XX.—CARISSIMA.

Quegli occhi non velino il splendor loro
Sotto il bel ciglio, tener come il frondo!
Vero è che lor beltà cacciò dal mondo
La mia pace; anzi caldo l'adoro.

Digitized by Google

Siccome un avaro nasconde l'oro,
La memoria del nostr' amor nascondo
Colla tua sembianza, si profondo
Nel cuor, che niente tocci il gran tesoro.
Ci manca adora il dolce abbracciamento,
Il bacio più celeste, ed altra cosa
Tanto soave al voler giovenile.
Il vederti mi gode : sono un vento
Chi passa furtivo la fresca rosa
E seco porta il suo spirto gentile !

SUPERSTITION.

INSCRIBED TO SWINBURNE.

THE mailèd giant stalks the field,
His ensign pieced with many a pall.
His greaves, his helmet and his shield
Are dismal proofs of reason's fall.
His challenge chills the blood of all
Till every brow is white and damp,
And even the goodly frame of Saul
Sits cowering in the huddled camp.

Who is yon supple, ruddy youth ?
He comes with laughter on his lip ;
He brings that pebble, polished smooth
By waves of song, within his scrip.
And, from the sibilant line let slip,
It parts the spectre's cloud-built brain.
Then truth, advancing, smiteth hip
And thigh the whole infernal train.

Digitized by Google

THE HUMBLER EGOTISM.

TO ————

SINCE you and I have been so long acquainted,
It needs no Rafael's brush, no Dante's pen
To get myself in each particular painted
So you will know me when me meet again.
Too much be-devilled or too sadly sainted
Are the extremes which mark the sons of men
Who rise by notes upon Apollo's fiddle:
Now place me anywhere but in the middle.

I am, in fact, a creature of emotion,
Earth-born and on her lines exactly planned.
Five-sixths of me is feeling's mobile ocean,
The other sixth is reason's solid land.
Vibrating 'twixt aversion and devotion,
'Twixt Greenland's bergs and Afric's golden sand,
Th' unstable element's evaporation
Clothes the bare rock with comely vegetation.

Ah! this will make their stolid systems prickle
Who frown on sentiment, severely grave.
They know not that the thousand rills that trickle
From sympathy, the fainting lives to save;
And memory's lucent and embalming pickle
Are both distilled from passion's chainless wave,
Which, mild or boisterous in its constant action,
Preserves the whole rank mass from putrefaction.

Digitized by Google

Yet sensibility is but a gift
Of which posterity alone is proud.
The darkened dust men once essayed to sift
Becomes their desert guide of fire and cloud.
But life soon grows a grievous load to lift,
So richly and peculiarly endowed
With talents for another's need available,
But for your own, uncertain and unsalable.

Oh yes, unsalable because unbought,
A gift imparted for the general pleasure;
But still ignored, unprized and set at nought
When gauged and reckoned by the standard measure;
Though all the while the grains of finest thought
Line the grey cells like deeply-buried treasure,
They ne'er attract the world's witch-hazel rod
Which turneth always to the senseless clod.

I stand sometimes aghast, examining
How good and evil in my make unite.
'Tis universal, for the mountains fling
The deepest shadow and the rosiest light;
All with the honey is the horrid sting;
The mouth is fashioned both to kiss and bite,
And thus the opposites so meet and mingle
That one from t'other I can scarcely single.

I claim some virtue, though it shine at best
Like fire though coals which feed the flame, not
If I have follies—and it is confessed— [smother.
They have but cursed myself and not another.
As for my kindness, let my deeds attest:
Believe me, I'd call any man my brother.

Digitized by Google

* * * * *

* * * * *

As for those mysteries, shaded yet sublime,
Through which the race prodigiously has striven
By pyramid and spire the skies to climb,—
Weighted with chains not yet entirely riven,
Seeking through medium of a real crime
To get a suppositious sin forgiven—
My youth was one long panoramic vision
Of both extremes—Tartarean and Elysian.

Almost as soon as I was born a sinner,
I fairly overflowed with innate piety,
But found the dogmas, like the Hidalgo's dinner,
Of food too scant, of cloth too much variety.
And since betwixt the outward man and inner,
'Twixt faith and works, I note the contrariety,—
I am, like Horace, as a natural sequence,
"Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens."*

Yet I have shunned the sin of Socrates,
That grand mistake of all earth's foolish bold ones,
Who seek to introduce new deities.—
I might have voted to depose the old ones;
But need their help against—my enemies?
Oh no; against my friends, those hot and cold ones
Who, filling up their jovial hemlock† bowls,
Press me to drink the health of all their souls!

* A scant and rare adorer of the gods.

† The readers will scarcely need to be reminded that this was the venomous decoction to which the Athenians treated their distinguished townsman.

Digitized by Google

If I have any idol, 'tis not verse;
I live not by it and can die without it.
I don't want Pegasus to draw my hearse
Lest tender-hearted folks might talk about it.
Whether the beast or I appeared the worse,
Somebody would be sure to spy and shout it.
A mortal needs not elegy nor ode
To keep the cold from out his last abode.

And yet to me the muse has not been charmless,
One of the nine,—I may not tell her name.
I thought her lovely and she thought me harmless,
And that is how the casual courtship came.
The rudest swain of any—herdless, farmless,
I wooed her in a manner, not the same
As the Arcadians did to mellow flutes;
Yet she consented. What may be the fruits?

If they should see the light, I'll ne'er accuse
The sovereign public, howsoe'er they treat them.
If dead-born offspring of the laboring muse,
No stabs can hurt, no puffs with life can heat them.
Nor will the world their burial rites refuse,
And this were sad, but better than to meet them
Ill-mannered vagrants through the country straggling
In charity's thin garb * * * *

Yet fear I not the worst that may betide;
My friends, though very few, are kind and trusty.
I was a child when criticism died—
Her soul went out with Christopher the crusty.*

* John Wilson, professor of moral philosophy in Edinburgh, died 1854. Under the name of Christopher North, he contributed "Specimens of the British Critics" to Blackwood's Magazine.

Digitized by Google

Some wear her stolen rapier by their side,
But cannot draw it, 'tis so very rusty ;
And grave dame Science will not bring the birch in
To punish me, who never was her urchin.

Your random authors surely never should
Be judged exclusively by what they write ;
For all the circumstances understood
May show them in a higher, happier light.
Size of the tree or fineness of the wood
Who can pronounce with but the leaves in sight?
'Tis not so much the vital inner essence
As the vague air that feeds the frail excrescence.

And those who judge should not be too unsparing,
Remembering in the liberties they take,
They build themselves no monument by rearing,
For other's fame, the gibbet and the stake.
Besides, how easy 'tis—don't think I'm swearing—
To damn the stanza which they could not make.
Yet the true flame, when they would quench it, suffers
No more than does the candle from the snuffers.

"Oh that mine enemy had writ a book!"
Cried patient Job in all his sore affliction.
(Which, by the way, far better he could brook
Than mild reproof and genial contradiction.)
And what a sweet revenge he could have took,
Turning his author's facts all into fiction,
His finest fancies into coarsest facts
That any simple villager enacts!

Digitized by Google

Still, watchful criticism has been needed
And will be, for the ever-broadening field
Of letters must be rigorously weeded
Of all things foreign to its wholesome yield.
Our present crop of bards is scarce exceeded
By twinkling stars on autumn nights revealed;
Their harmony is grand, but cannot reach us
Till tuned to something that is fit to teach us.

* * * *

We often think we have our eyes on fame,
Discovering late in life the silly wrong;
For folly, on a dull day, looks the same,
Most easily mistaken 'mid the throng.
I knew a man—he shall be without name—
Who chased an apparition very long
Thinking 'twas she who bears the silver trumpet,
And all the while it was the other ——,

I, in capacity of man, not poet,
You as the same, besides a right good fellow,
"Have done the state some service, and they know it,"
So take the dying words of grim Othello.
But gratitude—few climates now can grow it
Without an early sign of sere and yellow—
Is always better late than never shown,
And most appropriate when graven in stone.

Digitized by Google

THE WISH.

A LYDIAN LEGEND.

Long ages ago—so the chronicles say—
The mass of mankind had gone widely astray.
But the vices that put the pale virtues to rout
In a Lydian province broke violently out.

The church was fenced off in two well-defined groups:
On one side imposters, on t'other side, dupes;
For the priestly profession was—mark me—was then,
The craftiest craft 'mong the children of men.
The devotee brought them the flower of his flock
And the prince of his poultry—a kid and a cock.
Then the wily old priest, putting up for a wizard,
Minutely inspected the liver and gizzard.
This autopsy done, he proceeded to preach
A ghostly harangue in ambiguous speech,
Then, sly as a fox and sharp-set as a shark is,
Wound up his devotions and ate up the carcass.
So some were too feeble and others too strong
In opinion—and both sides were equally wrong;
Where some believe all that is taught in the schools
And the rest believe nothing, both classes are fools.

The state was distracted from more than one cause,
But chiefly the superabundance of laws;
And next, in default of old scutcheons and trophies,
The titles bestowed upon people in office.
In half an hour's walk half a score could be pointed
Out to you, as honored and oiled and anointed.

Digitized by Google

Every man who was fitted for bribery or barter
Might work his way up to a knight of the garter.
These knights were not dubbed by a king or a queen;
The job was performed by a patent machine,
Which ahead of all time kept revolving so fast
That every hour counted its "knight before last."

Civic honors were gained not by merit or chance.
They were sure to the man who had cash to advance,
And catching a mackerel by throwing a sprat
Was an art that land-fishers were skilfullest at.
The trader bowed down to a secular god,
And laid on his altar the first-fruits of fraud.
And the court-jester larded his rather thin praise
With "this marvellous age," and "these go-ahead days!"

The hoariest legends located the fount
Of learning beyond the Imalian mount,
But the Lydian masters held all knowledge sprung
From Gyges' good head and Candaules' smooth tongue.
The deepest researches had never yet dived
To the source whence the alphabet marks were derived;
Some claimed that old Egypt, which idolized beasts—
The founder of caste and the mother of priests—
When with writings hieratic her temples were full,
Modelled "A" off of Apis—her sacroscanct bull.
While others (and these were the true orthodox)
Swore that "A" came from Aleph, the Hebrew for ox.
So they argued and wrangled it out, till the seat
Of science was warmed with polemical heat,
And neither the point in dispute would surrender
Though it did not amount to a difference in gender.

Digitized by Google

Their poet was perched in a golden-wired cage
And warbled his notes from a black-lettered page,
Or fluted his fertilised soul through a reed
That sprouted coeval with mummy-wheat seed.
Yet he moulded his flowerets with wax of his own
Till they looked like King Tomkins's blossoms new-blown.
But all over the country, a numberless horde
Twanged loud on the nation's superb monochord.
That sorely-rasped wire they had learned to inflect
From the bad to the worse, with tremendous effect,
Till Orpheus slunk to the pit with his strum,
And the gods were amazed and the muses were dumb.

The government's head was the chief of a ring,
(The style of republics where money is king,)
Who, with nursery tales of a kingdom to come,
Kept his hand in the chest and the crowd 'neath his thumb.
Adorned and puffed up with his Tyrian vest,
He would listen to nought but his own little jest,
Yet every night witnessed his statesman-like tact,
And morn always blushed on another new act.
The boors and the burghers were nobly content
To be robbed of their living and bribed with a cent,
And they truckled before them as if to a god,
Yea, they put down their breeches and gave him the rod!

Still yearly did strife and contention increase
Till thousands of Clodpates were sworn of the peace,
And the judges, unstained by the dust of their shelves,
Sold judgment to all and kept none for themselves.

Digitized by Google

Fast life had outstripped the old laws of exchange
And given false credit unlimited range,
Till the men, whose initials were good as a bond,
Were the last to pay up and the first to abscond.

It seems, in this wretched condition of things,
That Jove was supreme over senates and kings,
Whose subjects rebelled, not by lead or cold steel,
But by sending to heaven their final appeal.
He bended his brows o'er that scene of distress
And issued a mandate for speedy redress.
For his ear of compassion no cry is too faint,
No evil so strong as to brave his restraint.
Then summoning Hermes—his envoy to earth—
He said, "I confide in your wisdom and worth.
Fly down to yon ant-hill and leaven the nations
With radical doctrine of wise innovations.
Apply the same wholesome correctives to all,
And leave unreformed neither hovel nor hall.
Here are premiums and pains. Be as tender as just.
Bestow where you can, and inflict where you must."

Now Hermes, the lively Olympian scout
Whose whole occupation was flying about,
Could accomplish a trip through the heavens as soon,
And with far less display than a modern balloon.
So, willing and prompt, not a meteor more swift
When just from the pole it has broken adrift,
Plumb downward he dived through the ether profound,
And ere you could tell it, was safe on the ground.

Digitized by Google

On landing, he cast off all heavenly looks,
Assuming the guise of an agent for books,
Inasmuch as he hailed every wight on the road
And entered unbid every mortal abode.

He scarcely had broached his diplomacy, when
He encountered, one morning, a couple of men,
Who were going a journey, on business belike,
For each had a staff that was shod with a spike.
With that affable ease that is foreign to art
And wins its smooth way to the ruggedest heart,
He saluted them gracefully, joined in their walk
And stirred their dull thoughts with his flood-tide of talk.
He smiled and he bowed with such elegant curve,
That they kept on their hats but threw off their reserve ;
Though their language was worthy of little regard,
Being true to their natures, both barren and hard.
For one was a miser—the toughest of nuts,
Who would cheat you the same as he did his own ——,
Who counted as earned every penny he saved
Till his wealth was enormous but less than he craved.
The other belonged to that s lenetic tribe
So easy to find and so hard to describe,—
A fellow who sought his own fortune far less
Than he pined and complained at another's success.
It always would drive him to utter despair
To see something good fall to somebody's share,
And the tenderest feeling he nursed in his heart
Was a yearning desire to be taking your part.

Digitized by Google

Keen Hermes had studied the animal man,
And knew him as only a diplomat can.
The samples before him he read at a glance:
Two nuisances clogging the nation's advance.
A niggardly miser—an envious churl!—
His lip took a merry but mischievous curl.

"My comrades," he said, "in our brief interview,
Very much have I learned that is useful and new.
Allow me to make you a trifling return,
Since people should pay for whatever they learn.
Each make a request. I will grant it off-hand
With the greatest delight; but you'll please understand,
That whatever thing the first speaker may claim,
The second shall have twice as much of the same."
'Twas a generous offer—a joyous surprise,
Which the two stupid visages could not disguise.
They gazed on him steadily, thinking he must
Be an angel rewarding the upright and just.
'Twas a generous offer! but never a word
Of thanks or request from the Lydians was heard.
Each mentally saw a munificent gift,
Nor questioned, nor doubted the gentleman's drift.
But the envious man had resolved to abstain
From asking until he could whine and complain,
And the miser had hushed up the joy in his breast,
Bent on laughing the latest, but laughing the best.

They stood with impatience, but neither would speak,
And there had they stood till the end of the week;
But Hermes declared he must leave them, and prayed
That, just to oblige him, the choice should be made.

Digitized by Google

Then the envious gentleman, heaving a sigh,
Said meekly, "I wish to be blind of one eye."
'Twas done—and the miser roared out with an oath:
"Oh! —— —— my eyes! I am blasted in both!"

If you think that this tale is too much to devour,
I assure you, sweet friends, that I learned it from Gower,
The moral Dan Gower, and he told it for truth
When our good Saxon tongue had the vigor of youth.
One cannot help liking whatever he says,
Though he should not be scanned by the light of these days;
His genius had wings, if his verses lack feet
And a moral shines out from his darkest conceit.

SWAN-SONG OF TIMON.

[Timon was an Athenian noble of boundless generosity, who feasted his friends and other parasites till his own means were exhausted. Then the ingrates expelled him from the city. Shakspere's powerful drama, founded on this narrative, has somewhat popularised it among moderns.]

I heard the mimic Timon's deep abhorence
Of perfidy and wrong,
Pouring hot curses down in hissing torrents
Upon the quaking throng.

It was enough to fire with kindred passion
The features of a saint.
It was enough to make the face of fa hion
Pale through an inch of paint!

Digitized by Google

And though it pierced the ear of fat contentment
Like a demoniac howl,
To me it sounded like the just resentment
Of heartless deeds and foul.

Strange sympathies my midnight pillow haunted,
And through my broken dream,
The wronged and ruined benefactor chanted
This bitter, mocking theme :

MOTHER earth ! to whom such numbers
Cling like babies to the pap,
Let me here in dreamless slumbers
Lay my tired head on thy lap !

Here beside the fretful ocean
Chafing in its sullen mood,
When my pulses cease their motion,
Call the vulture's famished brood.

Never let the feastful city
Find me in my last retreat,
Lest they mourn with real pity
Over what they cannot eat.

When the soldier's truceless summons
Stun their senate with amaze,
Let their voices, weak as woman's,
Vainly ask where Timon stays.

Digitized by Google

Luxury of hate I've tasted,
Lone within my forest den,
When my substance had been wasted
On the maws of thankless men,—

Parasites who drank my living
Thirsty as the desert plains,
Ever taking, never giving—
Flinty hearts and barren brains.

Live, Athenians! till your dealings
Fleece each other to the hide.
You have wounded Timon's feelings—
He has only galled your pride.

While the fawning instinct leads you,
By no principle be swayed.
Lick the foot of him who feeds you—
Bite his hand when stretched for aid.

Great in arms, in arts and letters
Were the men whose light is spent.
Were they truly your begetters?
Heavens! what a grand descent!

"Ancient virtue," pipes the poet
In the haggling market-place.
"Cecrops' progeny"—They show it
Only by a double face!*

* Cecrops, the founder of Athens, was represented by a double figure to symbolize the fact of his having instituted marriage.

Digitized by Google

Was not Jove the son of Saturn?
Did he not his sire expel?
'Tis the sole celestial pattern
That my country copies well.

But your proudest feats recorded
Wear a dark, disgraceful stain—
Brave Miltiades rewarded
With the dungeon and the chain!

Yet the Amphictyonic council
From their most exalted post
Touch their foreheads to the groundsel
When th' avengers touch our coast.

Zeus! who could be a scorner
In our city's holy plan?
Scores of gods at every corner
Where 'tis hard to find a man.

Faith is fled; she never lingers
Where the ways are so corrupt
That the miser's crooked fingers
Choke the friend with whom he supped;

Where despite the judge's ermine,
And despite the lawyer's brief,
Solon's skill could scarce determine
Which is justice, which the thief!

Public conscience feels no tension—
There is nothing of it left;
What for statesmen is a pension,
In their dupes would be a theft.

Digitized by Google

Courtesy? 'tis that creature smirking
O'er a counter at the fairs,
With a spirit in him lurking
Just as rotten as his wares.

O ye kindlier billows, flinging
Round me many a big salt tear,
Lift your voices, join my singing
Till the monster world shall hear.

Echo Timon's benediction
On the many and the few;
That the race, without restriction,
Long may live—and die so, too!

THE TYRANT OF SYRACUSE.

When Syracuse in boding hour
Beheld with rainy eyes
A low-born villain seize the power
For sovereign exercise,
Beneath his thrall she seemed to cower,
Nor made attempt to rise.

'Twas strange that men who bragged like those,
That in the worst attacks
By foreign arms, no mortal foes
Had ever seen their backs,
Should meekly bear a despot's blows
And daily-doubling tax!

Digitized by Google

A mercenary mob obeyed
The tyrant's dread command,
And at his bidding, promptly laid
His scourges on the land,
So freedom had to rue a raid
If she but raised a hand.

Truth came not near him, for to thrones
The truth could seldom reach.
Deaf were his ears to pity's tones
But not to flattery's speech ;
And, rest assured, he made no bones
Of causing bones to bleach.

Being bent on conquest, he bereft
Of life the neighboring states,
And with ferocious pleasure cleft
His luckless captives' pates
Which, fixed in ghastly rows, he left
To fester o'er the gates !

But here I need not waste a word
On Dionysius' reign ;
For every one of us has heard
Of that outrageous stain ;
But one small incident occurred
That may be told again.

The tyrant had of self-conceit
A most uncommon share.
Deeming that no one could compete
With him in genius rare,
He valued his poetic feet
Above his natural pair.

Digitized by Google

Prodigious pains but little art
His compositions showed ;
The silliest freak with him could start
A dithyrambic ode,
Which rumbled like a rustic cart
Along a rocky road.

And yet the whole Trinacrian vote
Accorded him renown,
For when the coteries failed to quote
His idyls through the town,
The tyrant always struck a note
That brought their houses down !

He had one literary clique
To read him and admire—
His courtier-creatures, mostly Greek
And judges of the lyre ;
But yet the puppets had to squeak
Responsive to the wire.

But when on the Olympic games
His verse he did inflict,
The critics—honorable names—
A righteous quarrel picked ;
His poems were given to the flames,
His readers hissed and kicked.

Crestfallen was the monarch then
And smitten with the blues ;
Yet would he not forswear the pen,
But daily prayed the muse
To help him curse those sons of men
Who had no liberal views.

Digitized by Google

And then, his courtier-throng before,
From morn till day was done,
He raved his crabbed lyrics o'er,
Which, howe'er they might stun,
The fawning rascals praised, and swore
He was Apollo's son!

But there was one fine man at court,
Most frank in all his ways,
Who, being called on to support
The credit of the lays,
Replied that pæans of that sort
Were good—to beg for praise.

Then Dionysius, raging mad
At this unpleasant fact,
As if his sacred person had
Been openly attacked,
Resolved to spit him like a shad,
Or have him flayed and racked.

And thus the frowning tyrant spoke:
"Was ever cheek so hard?
Plebeian dog! dare you provoke
To wrath a royal bard?
You'll see how dear will cost that joke.
What ho! my body-guard!"

Forthwith in rush the menial crew,
And instantly surround
Philoxenus, whom down they threw
And firmly gagged and bound;
Then, at a word, they bore him to
The quarries, underground

Digitized by Google

Thereat the citizens rebelled
And threatened death and woe,
Till Dionysius was compelled
To let his prisoner go,
And rank and favor previous held
Again on him bestow.

A short time after this event
There was a royal feast
To which a host of people went—
A thousand at the least,—
Where much old-fashioned merriment
The springs of joy increased.

Just as the banquet-board was spread,
The king was pleased to cause
His latest poem to be read
With proper tone and pause,
And though it dizzied every head,
It met with great applause.

Philoxenus was standing by
But no delight betrayed,
Though in his half-averted eye
A smile sarcastic played.
The king remarked, and asked him why
No compliment he paid.

Was not the ode of that grand kind
Which crowned a man with glory?
Philoxenus, with air resigned,
Yet looking somewhat sorry,
Said to the guards who stood behind,
"Carry me back to the quarry!"

Digitized by Google

So unexpectedly 'twas said
In such a quiet way,
The tyrant turned extremely red,
Yet had the grace to say,
As round the stifled laughter spread,
"You're just as good's a play."

Thus may brave hearts in every place
To truth give always scope,
And fear not, though in danger's face,
With giant wrong to cope,
Till every tribe and every race
That in their shackles grope,
Shall on unbending manhood base
Their freedom and their hope!

ARCHILOCHUS.

A TALE OF ANCIENT GREECE.

I WILL stretch him, he said, on the rhythmic rack
And give him a few faint twinges.
I will make his tough old tendons crack,
Nor let the iambic engine slack
Till every vertebra in his back
Is twisted off the hinges!

Archilochus uttered this fiendish threat,
And for whom, think ye, 'twas intended?
The crabbed old sire of his darling pet,
The girl he wanted but couldn't get,
For the governor's heart and foot were set
And the match was cruelly ended.

Digitized by Google

And no one knew the cause of complaint
That had driven the pair asunder.
Archilochus had no moral taint
That could deepen the hues of beauty's paint;
He had always been true as a dying saint
To the laws he was living under.

He had no habits of ruinous waste,
And few young men were wiser.
In matters of literary taste,
He knew the real gem from the paste,
But he ne'er would pronounce with any haste
Betwixt a knave and a miser.

With a generous spirit, a sprightly mind
And a body not less active,
He had, however, been left behind
In the race for wealth; he had felt inclined
More strongly to something more refined—
To metal more attractive.

But no one so deftly could sweep the string
That thrilled to his heavenly lyrics;
And sweet as the wild-bee's murmuring,
They settled over each blossoming thing,
But sharpened into a deadly sting
When dealing with empty empirics.

He could work such wildfire into his theme
As to set their nerves to prickling,
And daze them into the nightmare dream
That a million metres of solar beam
Were focussed into a half-inch stream
And through their anatomy trickling!

Digitized by Google

So the ode was written. Oh cruelly rough!
Oh piercingly keen and provoking!
The critics all hailed it with "Good enough,"
But the old man styled it the wretchedest stuff,
And vowed that he "wasn't going to suff"
But here he was taken with choking.

He groaned a most unearthly groan
And began to look despairing.
Next morning they found him all alone,
Hanged by the neck and dead as a stone,
For rage, like love, is commonly prone
To end in some dire ensnaring.

The Delphic priesthood hallowed the verse
And hung it up over the altar.
'Twas sung to frighten the babe at nurse,
And grave historians stooped to rehearse
How a few strong lines of a poet's curse
Were twisted into a halter!

There is no moral for modern times,
Young man, in a tale so tragic.
'Twould be the blackest of social crimes
To taunt her papa with the jingle of rhymes,
But tickle his ear with the jingle of dimes,
And 'twill act on his heart like magic!

Digitized by Google

RECONSTRUCTION.

IMPROMPTU AT A MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF A CERTAIN JOINT STOCK COMPANY.

THE scriptures affirm when a man has got through
With the demon by which he was haunted and curst,
Then ships him with seven other demons anew,
The last situation is worse than the first.

The truth of that text I have reason to know.
My board of directors again is enrolled,
Composed of the mystical seven, and lo!
The new set of devils are worse than the old.

NERO II.

[These stanzas were sent to an ancient teacher, of great self-importance, who having through carelessness, burned down a new school house, wrote to the papers an account of the disaster, bewailing the loss of his own "terrestrial globe and valuable Latin works which could not be replaced." He had once been suspended for being over fond of the violin.]

DESPITE the terrors of your frown,
Despite your threatened lashes,
An urchin, then, has brought you down
To sackcloth and to ashes.

That cruel flame, which knew no law
When this old world was younger,
Still lies in wait for men of straw
To satisfy its hunger.

Digitized by Google

Such ruin fell but once before :
Old Nero twanged his fiddle
When Rome, red-ripe from husk to core,
Was hissing like a griddle.

With flames which did her marrow melt
And into bone-dust crackle
The wall that to the savage Celt
Flung back their answering cackle.

It seized the conqueror's side-tracked car,
And climbed the upper story :
It made the old S. P. Q. R.*
Sure-Pop. Quick Road to glory !

It ran the golden chair to dross
Which bloated Lollio sat in,
And lank Orbilius mourned the loss
Of all except his Latin.

Fate folded up that fiery robe
To wrap it second-handed
Around the whole terrestrial globe
Which you alone commanded.

And like the bolts Jove used to launch
With direful consequences,
It burned your Latin, root and branch,
Prefixes and pretences.

* The letters in the Roman standard, for Senatus populusque Romani, that is, the senate and people of Rome.

Digitized by Google

Henceforth within some rural grot
The banished muse must lull us;
Since you have made the town too hot
For Ovid and Catullus.

Alas for learning, when her torch,
That warmth and light afforded,
Must to a blackened cinder scorch
The temple where she boarded!

And oh what poignant sorrow lurks
Within this sad reflection:
The martyrdom of heathen works
Can have no resurrection!

I've heard of words congealed by frost
In polar air that hovered,
But tongues by burning ash-tubs lost
Can never be recovered.

Yet fate propounds a golden rule
For every tribulation,—
(Except for those still keeping school)
The law of compensation.

Fame's temple must be widened now
By two more fire-new niches,
Since you and Dame O'Leary's cow*
Are added to its riches!

* The cause of the great Chicago fire.

Digitized by Google

SAILING IN SUMMER.

IMPELLED by sails in steady trim
And strength of limb,
As gaily o'er the tide we skim
As through the air, the swallow.

Old Nereus and the scaly train
In his domain
May ply their membrane fans in vain
Our joyous course to follow.

The ash is pliant in our grip
With measured dip,
And curling like a maiden's lip
When love may pass for scorning,

The tiny ripples dash astern,
Then circling turn,
As if enchanted to discern
Our boat the waves adorning.

Now furl the sail, suspend the oar;
We touch the shore,
Which summer reigns serenely o'er
In undisturbed seclusion:

Here love might pitch his leafy tent
On pleasure bent,
With heaven's full and free consent—
Without the world's intrusion.

Digitized by Google

MY AMERICA.

Steure, muthiger Segler —*Schiller.*

Ay, though the social martyr-stake
Be planted for opinion's sake,
It is not self-deceiving
To hold, unawed, unrecompensed,
Despite a thousand creeds incensed,
One simple steadfast faith against
A whole world unbelieving.

Before the true-souled Genoese
There rolled the most unknown of seas.
All other shipmen shunned it.
Dark mystery on its outmost edge
Lay like an adamantine hedge.
His bold prow cleft it like a wedge,
And found a world beyond it.

Thus must I too pursue alone
A course peculiarly my own
Far in the dangerous distance.
I heed not warning, threat or sneer,
While conscience whispers, Do not fear,
For thy America is here,
Or nowhere in existence.

Digitized by Google

THE ORATOR.

OLD SCHOOL.

Oh what a rarity on earth is he
 Who can command the full flood-tide of speech,
Which rolling on, resistless as the sea,
 With grandest thunders marks its utmost reach!
 In vain the drowsy dons essay to teach
The modulated yet impetuous swing
 Of Athens' spokesman standing to impeach
The foxy motives of the Emathian king!—
 That has the perfect pitch, that has the rousing ring.

Yes, proudest of the proud Hellenic arts
 Was eloquence, when Athens' gifted son
With lofty speech could fire ten thousand hearts
 And make them in their fury beat as one.
 Each rounded period—not too finely spun—
Gleamed fiercely as a falchion from its sheath;
 And Philip, ere the day on which Bull Run*
Was antetyped on Chæronea's heath,
 Even Philip feared that tongue more than the dragon's teeth.

* The place of the first encounter between the Union and the Confederate forces in the great Southern rebellion. The stampede of the former was notorious. The route of the Greeks at the battle of Chæronea, which made the power of Philip supreme, was not less complete.

Digitized by Google

Again, behold the greatest Roman stand
In the dense forum or the senate room;
His words more dexterous than the headsman's hand
To strip the dark-souled traitor for his doom.
His mighty breath fanned into lasting bloom
The name of some whom no one else would praise,
And blasted Verres' fortunes. But the gloom
Of exile fell. He fled between two days,
And from the closing scene we turn away our gaze!

Who now can speak with such sublime effect?
Or where can such true eloquence be heard?
The heart uniting with the intellect,
A passion and a purpose in each word,
Till all the listening energies are stirred
And firmly centred in the coming deed,
Though danger, death, destruction be incurred,
The high, the low rise, answering to the need
Of men, heroic men, to follow and to lead!

NEW SCHOOL.

Make way there, Tully and Demosthenes!
And let that candidate in broadcloth coat,
(Which can be turned, as often as ye please,)
Usurp the rostrum and unvalve his throat!
Not to fight Philip, but to win a vote
He storms the startled air with tongue and fist.
Has that man brains?—No, but he has a note
For fifty dollars on his private list—
That is the eloquence few moderns can resist.

Digitized by Google

Behold the preacher, who from foreign soil
Digs up a subject of the buried past,
Its fossil joints worked smooth with midnight oil
And polished like a stately plaster cast—
Some warrior, laying with a ram's-horn blast
In shapeless heaps a wicked city's walls ;
And so he batters nature till at last
Her sweet restorer on his audience falls—
That is the eloquence which earns the highest calls !

AGARISTE.

(EXTRACT FROM A SUPPRESSED POEM.)

* * * * *

Her face, with youth and animation glowing,
Was like the sea-shell delicately tinted ;
Her tresses, in their natural freedom flowing,
More golden than the royal fillets glinted.
Nought but an angel's pure caress had printed
The cunning dimples in each laughing cheek
Where all the loves were playing hide and seek.

Even such a jewel shone before their eyes ;
Enough to make the saintliest man forget
His home on earth and that beyond the skies,
Or barter both without the least regret,
Or pawn a mitre or a coronet
To purchase what?—a rapturous gasp—a kiss,
Which must be stolen to yield its perfect bliss.

Digitized by Google

Oh blessed madness! envied, blamed and pitied,
If sober judgment does not call a halt,
After the happy culprit has committed
A thousand follies to one graver fault.
Sure, love was given in order to exalt
Our fallen natures with its heavenly glow,
But ah! how oft it lays our best hopes low!

Still, it attains the goal for which it panted;
And how exultant in life's fervid season
Its crimson banner is unfurled and planted,
Passion rebelling 'gainst imperial reason.
What shall we term it? High and holy treason,
Which conquers and then peoples its domain
With several thousands for each thousand slain!

NOCTURNE.

The fields and meadows lie forsaken,
In stillest midnight they repose.
My better life begins to waken,
The desert blossoms like the rose.

The stormy passions now are sleeping,
With every thought that is not good;
While heaven o'er silent earth is keeping
The starry bond of brotherhood.

Digitized by Google

Here in my humble study seated
Where sheds the lamp its friendly light,
The search for truth seems half completed;
The heart discovers what is right.

Here reason low but clear is speaking.
Hope plumes again its cherub wing,
And, not in vain, the soul is seeking
Fresh life at its perennial spring.

Alas! almost as soon as tasted,
The fount of peace is dried and wasted.
My new-born energy has slackened,
My lips with thirst are parched and blackened;
Dear God! what fearful alternation!
My steps, so near the skies attaining,
The flowerless, flinty earth is paining—
So falls my fairest expectation!

Cold moon, thou lost illumined child
Of earth, that scorn'st the misty air,
Thy brow is still serenely mild,
But neither warmth nor life is there.
How like the student in despair!—
How like, and yet how different,
For thou canst wander everywhere,
While he is fettered to a chair,
And in a gloomy dungeon pent!

Digitized by Google

TO FLOAREA.

On roseate pinions came the lusty morn
The blushing flowers to woo ;
And in that hour, one blissful thought was born,
One fair ideal did my song adorn,
And that was you.

The sun, ascending to his summer height,
A glory round me threw.
My spirit, revelling in warmth and light,
To one dear object only took its flight,
And that was you.

When dewy evening over hill and plain
In grateful silence drew,
I only saw, amid the twilight's wane,
One picture dominating heart and brain,
And that was you.

When from the East night's deepening shadows flocked,
A vision on me grew
Of being in a maid's embraces locked,
Aud on her breast to heavenly slumbers rocked,
And that was you.

The sweet delusion fled with too much haste,
But we can make it true :
Oh let me, while awake, that rapture taste,
And I shall know, in pressing lip and waist,
That it is you !

Digitized by Google

THE TOKEN.

WRITTEN BY FLOAREA IN ONE OF THE AUTHOR'S BOOKS.

L'AMANT que j' adore
Prêt à me quitter,
D'un instant encore
Voudrait profiter.

Félicité vaine,
Qu' on ne peut saisir ;
Trop près de la peine
Pour être un plaisir !

The man I adore
Being ready to leave,
Just one token more
Of my love would receive.

Oh happiness vain,
In a moment destroyed !
Too near unto pain,
To be fully enjoyed !

Digitized by Google

RESPONSE.

Oh no, it was not all in vain ;
The happiness was fleet,
But 'twas the near approach of pain
Which made it doubly sweet.

The winter winds blew cold and bleak
Across the fields of snow ;
They could not banish from her cheek
Affection's vivid glow.

Her hair in many a silken mesh
About my neck was blown,
But closer * * *
* * * *

And yet there flowed more lasting bliss
From love's delicious wine :
The soul, transfused through that warm kiss,
Is still inspiring mine.

Digitized by Google

THE FAITHLESS FLOAREA.

"Chante, rossignol, chante,
Toi, qui es toujours gai."

Sing on, O little bird ;
Pour forth those notes divine,
It suits thee to be gay,
While I in sadness pine.

It suits thee to be gay
While I in sadness pine.
Thou hailest now the ray
Which I have seen decline.

Thou hailest now the ray
Which I have seen decline.
My mistress is estranged,
But for no fault of mine.

My mistress is estranged,
But for no fault of mine :
Because for some one else
I did a wreath entwine.

Because for some one else
I did a wreath entwine—
I wish those faded flowers
Were growing on their vine.

I wish those faded flowers
Were growing on their vine,
And that my mistress' heart
Were joined as close to mine !

Digitized by Google

FAREWELL TO FLOAREA.

Not one brief month has flitted by
Since love awakened from delusion;
Indeed the ink is scarcely dry
Upon its last refined effusion!

Yet the perpetual vows we swore
With such luxuriant wealth of diction
Read like a page of ancient lore
Writ in the style of modern fiction.

How strange that late—so very late—
A point, though slightly stretched, would screen us,
And now the period seems as great
As is the yawning gulf between us!

How curious that the merest chance
Involved me in a dream so deeply—
A sort of yellow-leaved romance,
That cost too dear, though offered cheaply.

Our choicest feelings, pleased and pained,
Long underwent the sorest tension,
And, struggling for expression strained,
The last resources of invention.

My phrases worshipped on their knees,
While yours, more heavenly, took to flying,
Like seraph bands that soar at ease,
With all the natural grace of lying.

Digitized by Google

The little naked god, of whom
The amorous Greeks were wont to fable,
Forsaking fields of vernal bloom,
Besieged me at the dinner table.

Although his wings were hid from view—
The hour, indeed, was somewhat prosy—
I recognised his proper hue
Which Milton calls celestial rosy.*

Ours was a most ethereal feast
That pampered up our ghostly tenants
Without the blessing of the priest,
But kept our bodies doing penance—

A festival which might uncork
The best that ever won the laurel,
But, like the dinner of the stork,
It yielded nothing but a moral:

Your poet learned that nature's harp
Has yet untested sweeps and ranges;
That she can shift from flat to sharp,
And ring the most astounding changes.

His planetary soul, that spins
In endless cycles, glowing, warming,
Through the bright zodiac of sins,
Is never wholly past reforming.

*blushing
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue.—*Paradise Lost.*

Digitized by Google

Unlike the earth, which could not live
Without the charm the sun has lent her,
He wastes the warmth he has to give,
Revolving round a common centre.

But when some new repellent force
Has snapped the golden chains asunder,
He safely steers a tangent course
And sets the co-sine down a blunder.

And though at first it bites like grief,
This sudden frosty change of season,
There comes a feeling of relief
In lapsing from romance to reason.

Each hour that you were out of sight
Was like a glacial period reckoned,
And 'twas the longest Lapland night
To do without you half a second.

But since we fall on April days
With such capricious freaks of weather,
I may, by fast and prayer and praise
Even do without you altogether!

Digitized by Google

THE HOLOCAUST.

FLOAREA'S LOVE LETTERS BURNED.

THOSE letters, innocently bold
In all their tender yearning,
Must now be tried like virgin gold ;
Yea, let this mass of wealth untold
Be purified by burning.

There lies the substance and the sum
Of deathless love recorded !
'Tis not the first time faith has come
From lock and key to martyrdom
And gone to get rewarded.

Its body in the fire must die
Without a drop to drench it.
The flame must riot red and high :
The tear founts' rather scant supply
Can lend no aid to quench it.

That sweet, confiding, melting style,
Oh how I once enjoyed it !
Now, as I light the funeral pile
It would be sacrilege to smile,
Yet how can I avoid it !

Digitized by Google

The smile which I cannot control
Is less profane than stupid.
It issues from an honest soul
That sees its incense upward roll
As nonsense burned to Cupid.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust!
And now my heart is lighter.
Did not those traitorous scrolls combust,
They might some day betray my trust,
As did their pretty writer!

THE FURIES OF THE FEAST.

Once I read with boyish wonder
Deepening to romantic awe,
Of Æneas and his band
Voyaging slow towards Hesperland,
What mishaps they labored under,
And what prodigies they saw.

'Twas like looking on and seeing
Swelling sail and bending oar,
When they left the Thracian coast
Warned by Polydorus' ghost,
Or in consternation fleeing
From the pestilential shore.

Digitized by Google

I beheld their navies standing
Through the storm that raved around
Towards an island fair and green ;
And anon the crews are seen
In a sheltered haven landing,
Drenched and worn, but safe and sound.

Glad from peril and from suffering
To escape so well at last,
Soon they pile the slaughtered game,
Soon the turf-dressed altars flame—
To the gods a grateful offering,
Then a bountiful repast.

Hark ! a sound like thunder's muttering
Spreads along the darkened skies !
'Tis the Harpies' monster brood ;
Flocking at the scent of food,
Down they swoop with fiercest fluttering
And a burst of hideous cries.

Harpies ! more abhorrent creatures
Never did man's peace assail :
Winged and armed with crooked claws,
Filling, emptying their maws
Both at once—their flaccid features
With eternal hunger pale !

And the Trojans, terror stricken,
Huddle into shivering groups ;
They, who on Scamander's banks
Broke the serried Grecian ranks,
Now are timid as the chicken
When the pirate falcon swoops.

Digitized by Google

From the pests no place secure is,
Not the cove o'erhung with trees ;
Thither, as the Trojan crew
Seek their banquet to renew,
Rush the semi-human furies
And th' untasted viands seize.

Fight them ! At the signal sounded,
Hissing flies the arrowy hail,
To the mark all vainly sent.
Swords are dinted, javelins bent,
Arrows blunted and rebounded
As from off thrice-proven mail.

Launch again the shattered shipping,
Let the cursed island sink!
All on board confusedly leap,
Loose their sails and tempt the deep,
Trembling till the isle is dipping
'Neath the far horizon's brink.

Such the legend weirdly charming,
Which Virgilius Maro sings ;
But the sapient Pecksniff Smith
Says the Harpies are a myth,
For in reading and in farming
He has never met such things.

Shall old fame be contradicted ?
True, the fires of song are spent,
But the Harpies still survive,
Propagate their breed and thrive,
Not to one lone isle restricted,
Nor the eastern continent.

Digitized by Google

Floods of scorn with laughter rippled,
Diamond-pointed darts of wit
Never daunt them in the least;
Still they fasten on the feast,
And, instead of being crippled,
Never know that they are hit!

Better face the warring weather,
North and South and West and East;
Better Syrtis, shifting grounds,
Better Scylla's barking hounds—
Better all of them together
Than one fury of the feast!

TROY AFLOAT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In these pages my aim was to give, as nearly as possible, a literal translation of the third book of Virgil's Æneid. I began the work in boyhood, and abandoned it when, on becoming better acquainted with the Latin language, I realised my inability to perform the task. The following is part of the story related by Æneas, the leader of the exiled Trojans, to Dido, queen of Carthage.

After it pleased the gods to overthrow
The power of Asia and the race of Priam,—
Unmerited their doom—when Ilium fell
And all Neptunian Troy smoked on the ground;
To distant exile and to desert shores
Directed by the gods, we build a fleet
Close by Antandros, 'neath the Phrygian hills,

Digitized by Google

And knowing not where fate may bid us rest,
Collect our men. 'Twas early summer time;
My sire Anchises bade the sails be set;
With tears we leave the coasts and those dear fields
Where Troy once stood. An exile sailed I forth
With but my son, my comrades and the gods.
There is a far off land whose ample fields
The Thracians till, once 'neath Lycurgus' laws;
Friendly to Troy, and holding kindred faith,
While happier days were ours. I thither steer,
And on the curving shore, though fate opposed
I lay the first foundations of a city,
And from my name Æneadæ call the place.
To my Dionean mother and the powers,
Who looked auspicious on my work begun,
I sacrificed; and to the king of heaven
I slew upon the strand the struggling bull.
It chanced a mound was near, upon whose top
The cornel twigs grew close, and myrtle shoots
Rose thickly-clustering, all like pointed spears.
I went, and strove to pluck up from the ground
The verdant laurel-wood that I might deck
The altar with its fresh and leafy boughs,
When lo! a wonder fearful to relate!
For, from the torn roots of the sprig first plucked
Oozed slowly forth and fell dark drops of blood
And stained the earth with gore. A shudder seized
My limbs, and chilly horror froze my veins!
Again I plucked another tender shoot
The hidden and mysterious cause to find;
Again from out the bark the black blood streamed.

Digitized by Google

In wonder deep, I prayed the wood'land nymphs
And father Mars, who o'er those fields presides,
That they might turn this prodigy to good.
Then for the third time did I seize a shoot,
Bending, for stronger grasp, my knees to earth.
(Shall I proceed?) A deep groan from the mound
Arose, and thus a voice my ears bespake:
"Why tear a wretch, Æneas? Spare the dead,
Nor sully pious hands. To thee in Troy,
I was no stranger; and this blood is mine.
Oh fly this cruel land, this greedy shore!
For I am Polydorus. Here transfixed,
This iron growth of arrows covered me
And grew in course of time to pointed spears."
Then, all bewildered with perplexing fears
I stood, with stiffening hair and powerless tongue.
This Polydorus, with vast stores of gold,
Had been confided by his father Priam
Unto the Thracian king to be brought up,
When first the Dardan arms began to yield,
And when the foe our city held besieged.
His host, when fortune left the Teucrian arms
And followed Agamemnon's conquering bands,
Broke all restraint, and, murdering Polydorus,
Seized on his wealth. (What will not mortals do
Through cursed thirst of gold?) My dread subsiding,
To our elected chiefs—my father first—
I tell this miracle and ask their minds.
All counsel me to leave this wicked land
And spread our canvas to the southern gales.

Digitized by Google

But first we celebrate the funeral rites
Of Polydorus, heaping for his tomb
A goodly mound, with altars to his shade;
The Trojan ladies mournful gather round
With sombre fillets and sad cypress crowned,
And with loose-flowing locks, in manner due.
Then bring we cups of warm and foaming milk
And bowls with blood of recent victims filled;
We lay his soul to rest within the tomb,
And with united voice bid him farewell.
Soon as the deep assumed a safer look,
O'er its smooth waves the south winds rustling soft,
My comrades launch our navies from the beach.
Forward we move—town, shore and hills recede.
In mid sea lies a very pleasant isle
Sacred to Neptune and the Nereids,
Which, floating long around the shores and coasts,
The god who bears the bow first stationed firm,
To high Gyarus and Myconus bound
Immovable to mock the burly winds.
Arriving there, its placid haven received
Our wearied crews. Landing, we venerate
The city of Apollo, while the king,
Anius,—both king of men and priest of Phœbus—
His temples wreathed with sacred bays, drew near
And recognised an old friend in Anchises.
We join right hands, and enter 'neath the roof.
I reverence deep the temple of the gods,
The sacred fane, of ancient stones constructed.
O Thymbrian Apollo! grant, I cried,
A dwelling for our own; grant sheltering walls,—

Digitized by Google

A race and lasting city. Oh preserve
This second Pergamus of Troy, escaped
The Grecian sword and furious Achilles.
Whom shall we follow? whither go? or where
Fix our abode? O father, deign
To send an omen and direct our minds!
Scarce had I spoke, when suddenly all things
Began to tremble, doors and sacred laurels,
And even the mountain, while a murmuring sound
The tripod gave, in its recess disclosed.
Humbly we bow to earth and hear this voice:
"Ye brave Dardanians, that same land which bore
Your parent race, shall to her joyous breast
Receive you back; your ancient mother seek;
Then shall th' Ænean line extend its rule,
Your children's children and their progeny."
Thus Phœbus, and a mighty shout of joy
Arose; and all inquire what land is meant,
Or whither Phœbus would our wanderings lead.
My sire, then, thinking on the legends old,
Cried, "Hear, ye chiefs, and learn your future hopes!
In ocean lies the Cretan isle of Jove,—
Mount Ida there, the cradle of our race.
This fertile realm a hundred cities holds;
Thence Father Teucer, our great ancestor,
If memory serves, first sought the Rhœtian coast
And fixed his kingdom. Ilium was not yet,
Nor towery Pergamus; men dwelt in valleys low.
Thence Cybele, the mother goddess, and
The brazen cymbals of the Corybantes
And the Idæan grove; hence, too, those rites,

Digitized by Google

Mysterious, faithful kept, and the yoked lions
That drew the splendid chariot of the queen.
The gods direct us, therefore let us go,
Appease the winds and seek the Gnosian realm.
Nor is it distant: if Jove will, our fleet
Shall on the third morn touch the Cretan strand."
Thus spoke he, and upon the altars slew
The usual victims, offering first a bull
To Neptune, and another to Apollo;
A black sheep to the scowling storm-wind, and
A white one to the mild propitious zephyrs.
Report said that the chief, Idomeneus,
Expelled the kingdom of his sire, had left
All uninhabited the shores of Crete;
Its tenantless abodes no foemen held.
We leave th' Ortygian port, and o'er the sea
We speed, along the coast of Naxos where
Each hill-top echoes to the sport of Bacchus;
Past the fair shores of green Donysa, past
Olearos and Paros' snow-white cliffs,
The Cyclades, all scattered o'er the main,
And through unnumbered straits thick-sown with isles.
The seamen gaily sing amid their duties;
Cheerful we seek our own ancestral Crete;
A favoring wind our onward course still urges,
And soon we reach the old Curetan land.
Then eagerly I set about to build
A city which I re-name Pergamea;
My people, whom the name pleased, I exhort
To love their homes and rear a citadel.
Now were our ships drawn mostly on the beach,

Digitized by Google

Our youth engaged in tilling their new fields
And choosing wives; I gave them laws, and fixed
Their portions of the land; when suddenly
From the infected skies, a pestilence,
Most dire and grevious, fell on men and trees
And on our crops—a season fraught with death.
Men died or dragged their feeble frames around;
The dogstar also scorched our barren fields;
All green things withered, and the sickly crop
Refused us food. My sire advised to cross
The sea again, and at th' Ortygian shrine
Implore great Phœbus to remit our fault,
To show our weary journey's end, what aid
Our toils should have, and whither we should turn.
'Twas night, and slumber soothed all living things:
The imaged gods and the penates brought
With me from 'midst the ashes of old Troy
Rose on my vision while in sleep I lay,
Seen clearly in the paley light which streamed
From the full moon through windows in the wall.
And thus they seemed to speak and soothe my cares:
"That which Apollo would have told thee when
Thou left'st Ortygia, he repeats, unasked,
And lo! he sends us hither to thy house.
We, who have followed both thee and thy arms
Since fair Dardania blazed; we, who have crossed
With thee and in thy ships the swelling deep,
Will raise even to the stars thy future sons
And give thy city power. Thou shalt prepare
For a great race; yet must thou wander long.
Change this abode. Apollo bids thee not
To settle on these shores, nor yet in Crete.

Digitized by Google

There is a land (called by the Greeks Hesperia),
An old land, strong in arms and rich in soil:
Th' Œnotrians dwelt there once, but moderns call
The present race Italians, from their chief.
Those are our seats, and thence Dardanus rose,
And Father Iasus. from which prince ye sprang.
Therefore arise, and to thy aged sire
This sure announcement tell. Then let him seek
Corythus and the Ausonian land, for Jove
Denies to thee the fair Dictæan fields."

Moved by this vision and the voice of gods
(It was no dream, for I appeared to see
Their faces and their wreath-encircled hair,
And all their features plain before my view,
While chilly drops upon all my forehead stood)
Up from my couch I sprang, with lifted voice
And hands to heaven; then pour I mingled gifts
Upon the hearth. This glad devotion done,
I told Anchises all in full detail.
He knew the race, from its twin sources sprung,
And owned himself misled by modern fame
Concerning ancient places. Then he said:
"Son, by the destines of Troy controlled,
Cassandra sang to me those very things.
I recollect that these things were foretold
Unto our race, and that those realms were called
Sometimes Hesperia, sometimes Italy.
But who then thought that to the Hesperian shores
The Teucrians were to come? or who was moved
By fair Cassandra, as a prophetess?
Yield we to Phœbus then, and thus advised

Digitized by Google

A better course pursue." He said, and we
With glad alacrity his voice obey.
Leaving our settlement and some few men,
We spread our sails, and in our hollow barks
Speed o'er the boundless deep.—
Our ships were out at sea ; no longer land
Was seen, but sky above and waves around ;
When o'er our masts a gloomy storm-cloud hung
With tempest charged ; the darkened sea grew rough
The winds piled up the rolling waves, and huge
The billows rose ; all scattered, we were driven
O'er the wide surface of the boiling main.
The clouds wrapped in the sun, damp night obscured
The heavens, fierce lightnings burst the sullen clouds.
Far from our course we stray on seas unknown.
Even Palinurus could no longer tell
The day from night or ascertain the way.
Thus sailed we, in blind darkness, on the deep
During three sunless days, three starless nights ;
At length on the fourth morn the land was seen,
With distant rising hills and curling smoke.
We lower the sails and grasp the oars ; in haste,
The sailors, with their vigorous strokes, turn up
The foaming brine and sweep the azure plain.
The Strophades received us to their shores,
Saved from the waves : these islands called
In Greek the Strophades, rise boldly in
The great Ionian sea ; here dire Celæno
And other Harpies dwell, since Phineus' house
Was closed against them, and through terror, they
Were forced their former tables to abandon.

Digitized by Google

No monster dread as they, no fiercer pest
Can rear its head above the Stygian flood :
Huge birds with female faces, and with hands
Like claws ; their fearful visages are pale
With lasting hunger.—
When we the harbor here had entered, lo !
Spread o'er the plains we saw the goodly herds
And flocks of goats that browsed at will the grass.
We give them chase, and vow to offer up
A portion of the game to Jove himself
And to the other gods. Then on the beach
We strew our couches and commence our feast.
But sudden, with a fierce swoop from the hills,
The Harpies come, and flapping loud their wings,
Seize on our viands with their loathsome clutch,
While 'mid the foul stench rise their hideous cries.
Again far off, beneath a shelving rock
Shut in by thickest trees and gloomy shades,
We lay our tables and our altar fires.
Again, swift swarming from their lurking place,
The noisy flock with piercing claws surround
The feast, polluting everything they touch.
I order now my men to grasp their arms,
And wage strange warfare with the brood accurst.
Tis done : they hide their swords among the grass,
And carefully conceal their shields from sight.
Then, as again the Harpies downward glide,
Their pinions sounding o'er the curving strand,
Misenus gives the signal by a blast
Upon a trumpet, from his look-out high.
My comrades rise, and in close fight engage

Digitized by Google

With naked steel those vile birds of the sea.
But not the slightest wound in wing or breast
Do these receive, but soaring high in air,
Leave their rank traces on our feast despoiled.
Then by herself upon a lofty rock
Celæno perched, and cried with ominous croak :
"Spawn of Laomedon ! suffices not
Our slaughtered herds, but will ye war on us,
And drive us, harmless, from our rightful seats ?
Let these, my words, sink deep into your souls :
What the almighty father first disclosed
To Phœbus, and the latter showed to me,
I, foremost of the furies, tell to you.
Ye seek the Italian coast ; the winds, implored,
At length may suffer you to reach its ports ;
Yet ere ye gird with walls the destined city,
Fierce famine, for the injury done to us,
Shall force your bands to gnaw with wolfish teeth
Their very tables, in default of food ! "—

Digitized by Google

TRANSLATIONS.

GLORY.

FROM THE FRENCH OF LA MARTINE.

Ye generous favorites of the heavenly muse,
Two different courses open on your view:
Glory and wealth invite; ye wisely choose
The nobler of the two.

Thy choice, O Manuel, was early fixed;
Its promptings bade thine infant pulses leap.
But with thy glory woe is intermixed,
And we behold thee weep!

Yet blush to envy, as a thing of worth,
That sterile ease which sluggish souls desire.
To them belong the treasures of the earth,
To us belongs the lyre.

Thy country is the world, the centuries thine;
For when this generation is no more,
Successive ages, at the golden shrine,
Thy memory shall adore.

Yes, glory waits thee. But how hardly, and
At what a cost her sacred court we gain!
See dire misfortune at the portal stand
To dash our joy with pain.

Digitized by Google

Heartless Ionia saw her mighty bard—
Stooping with blindness and the weight of years—
Hold in his wasted hand (oh sad reward!)
A breadcrust wet with tears!

Then think of Dante—proudest of his race—
Begging an alms, his latest refuge gone,
His spirit tortured till his once sweet face
Grew fierce to look upon.

And Tasso, burning with a fatal flame,
In prison dreamed of beauty and renown;
His brows received too late the wreath of fame,
And were too soon crushed down.

See pale Cervantes crouching on his knees
Within a dungeon, feeble, stricken, maimed,
His genial humor which a world could please,
The dull king's wrath inflamed.

How many victims live from hope apart,
Striving with fate or with some tyrant's will!
Dear God! it seems as if the greatest heart
Were doomed to deepest ill.

Yet silence every murmur of the lyre;
Let weaker spirits wail their lot forlorn.
Thee, crownless king, such injuries should inspire
With strength and lofty scorn.

Digitized by Google

Be like the eagle, that sublimely soars,
Piercing all space with strong, undaunted eyes;
When round his native cliff the thunder roars,
He seeks the upper skies.

What matter if their barbarous decree
To foreign shores devote thy weary tread?
What matter if the desert sands should be
Thy last intended bed?

Nor chains, nor exile, nor the despot's rage
Can quench the ardor of a noble mind.
Lisbon shall claim the eternal heritage
Thy genius leaves behind.

Thou to a nation's love shalt be restored—
Athens her banished patriot did recall:
When Coriolanus fell, the Roman sword
Was first to avenge his fall.

And gentle Ovid, though he died exiled,
With suppliant hands stretched towards his distant home,
Bequeathed his ashes to the Scythian wild,
His glorious song to Rome!

Digitized by Google

THE DYING POET.

FROM THE FRENCH OF MILLEVOYE.

THE poet sang: his lamp burned low
The shadows deepened in his room,
As listening to these notes of woe,
Which stirred the midnight's heart of gloom.

The flower of my life is all faded—
Too early 'twas rent by the thorn;
My day has been darkly o'ershaded,
And night follows close on the morn.

A strife betwixt passion and duty,
A thirst for the wild and the free,
A vision of wonderful beauty,
A dream of things never to be;

A landscape where broad-spreading meadows
Were wooed by the amorous skies;
A desolate region of shadows
Where hope grows bewildered and dies;

A clear brook, whose dimples of gladness
White lilies leaned over to kiss;
A turbid stream, whirling in madness
Right over the fearful abyss.

A brief space of love and caresses—
A moment that shook every trust;
An hour of remorse and distresses,
Then downward to darkness and dust!

Digitized by Google

In a distant land there grows a tree
By pleasure and by pale death haunted ;
Sweet rest is fatal 'neath its boughs enchanted :
Delight of love, that plant resembles thee.
Thy mortal shade has waved o'er me,
Where, lulled in treacherous repose,
Fond wretch ! I well have merited these woes.

Break, lyre beloved ; thou canst not share
With me the darksome vault and chill ;
But all thy notes, once free as air,
Must be forever hushed and still.
Posterity may never own
My name, when judging from her throne
Renown that never fades ;
As Egypt judged, in days of yore
Fast by her lone lake's mystic shore,
Her kings' departed shades.

And yet ye few with hearts sincere—
Friends, ever firm and ever dear,
My dying pain is less
That some imperfect lays of mine
You will preserve on mem'ry's shrine
From cold forgetfulness,
And you, with whom my soul was twined
From childhood—lovely womankind !—
Even now your features seem
Before my wavering sight to glide
Like sun-bright things in autumn-tide,
Or like a morning dream.

Digitized by Google

Sweet phantoms! come; my shade demands
One last sad offering at your hands—
When generous spring, returning, weaves
The golden thread of lengthening days
Then, while the dewy twilight st^ys,
Come, strew upon my humble tomb
Fresh roses—flowers of briefest bloom—
As emblems of my early doom!—

The poet sang: as ceased the hymn,
His icy hand let fall the lyre.
His lamp, his life at once grew dim—
One moment saw them both expire.

THE HERO'S BATTLE-PRAYER.

FROM THE GERMAN OF KÖRNER.

FATHER, I call on thee!
Wrapt in the battle's fiery-bosomed cloud,
Amid its thunderbursts so fierce and loud,
Disposer of events, I call on thee
Father, thou leadest me.

Father, thou leadest me;
And whether death or victory be mine,
I yield to the inscrutable design;
According to thy will, so lead thou me.
And I acknowledge thee.

Digitized by Google

Yes, I acknowledge thee,
Both in the spring-time's vivifying breath,
And in the war-storm's sulphurous blast of death;
Great source of being, I acknowledge thee.
Father, thou guardest me.

Father, thou guardest me,
And to thy sovereign care my life I trust.
Thou may'st reclaim it from the gory dust,
For thine own purpose still Thou guardest me;
All praise give I to thee!

All praise give I to thee!
Since, not for mad ambition's vain reward,
But in a holy cause we draw the sword,
Bid triumph chant a hymn of praise to thee.
My God, and smile on me.

God, smile thou on me,
For freedom's sake; and if my veins must flow
To seal the deathless record—be it so.
For freedom's sake, more dear than life to me,
Father, I call on thee.

Digitized by Google

CALUMNY.

FROM THE FRENCH.

PUNISH calumny, ye kings;
For its poison breath
Into peaceful places brings
Trouble, strife and death!

How it seeks to blast the name
Of dove-like innocence!
'Gainst its sly, assassin aim
Be a strong defence.

'Tis a monster in disguise,
Covering hate with art;
On its tongue are honeyed lies—
Murder in its heart.

Follow not its subtle course,
Sown with specious flowers.
In its footsteps comes remorse
And the whole devours!

Digitized by Google

WOMAN.

FROM ANACREON.

GREAT nature, at time of creating, assigned
Most suitable gifts to each various kind:
A model of strength on the bull she conferr'd
With a frontlet that crowned him the king of the herd.
Then the lion came forth with a terrible dower—
The union of majesty, fierceness and power.
The timorous hare and the proud-prancing steed
She fitted expressly for wonderful speed;
And she gave to the bird, with its plumage so fair,
Those wings that can traverse the regions of air;
To the fish, fins and tail, that at will it might sweep
For pastime or food through the limitless deep.
On man she bestowed, for a dignified use,
A mind that can pierce through the dark and abstruse,
But when she formed woman—her crowning intent—
Nature, finding such gifts as the first, had been spent,
Endowed her with beauty's celestial charms,
As the brightest and most irresistible arms.
And the woman, to whom these sweet blessings belong,
Can humble the haughty and vanquish the strong;
Controlling the wild, and refining the rude,
One smile from her lips, and the world is subdued!

Digitized by Google

TO ANNIE.

(See Horace's well known Ode to Pyrrha.)

COME, Annie, to my wish disclose
What stripling, decked with many a rose
The April air perfuming,
Now courts you 'neath the grotto's shade,
For whom those auburn locks you braid
So neatly unassuming.

Ah! soon he'll mourn the broken vow,
And blame the gods who change allow
In words of solemn sweetness.
Wonder and grief shall fill his eyes
When rude waves heave and black storms rise
With unexpected fleetness.

He now believes you void of wiles,
All golden with enduring smiles,
All amiable and tender,
Nor yet suspects deceitful gales:
How wretched they with whom prevails
Your seeming placid splendor!

For me, the votive tablet shows
My pictured ship in safe repose—
An offering of devotion
To heaven, by whose kind aid I shaped
A wiser course, and death escaped
Upon love's treacherous ocean.*

* A man who had escaped perils on the ocean was bound to hang up in the temple a picture of his ship as a thank-offering to the sea-god.

Digitized by Google

THE RICHEST RULER.

FROM THE GERMAN.

SAT full many German princes
In the imperial hall of Worms:
Each his land, its wealth and numbers
Boasted in exulting terms.

"Glorious," spoke the kingly Saxon,
"Is my land in wealth and might;
Every hill within its bosom
Hoards a mine of silver bright!"

"Smiles my land in gay abundance,"
Said the Elector from the Rhine;
"Golden grain in valleys growing—
On the slopes, the blushing vine."

"Giant cities, stately convents,"
Ludwig of Bavaria cried,
"Stand to prove I rule the grandest
Realm in Germany so wide!"

Eberhard, the grey and bearded,
Würtemberg's belovèd lord,
Said, "My land has no great cities,
No vast hills with silver stored.

Digitized by Google

"Yet it holds some hidden treasures—
Not a man beneath my sway
But my head I might securely
On his lap confiding lay."

Then the Saxon, the Bavarian
And the Rhenish prince declare:
"Noble count, you are the richest
For your land has jewels rare!"

THE WANDERING JEW.

FROM THE FRENCH OF BERANGER.

O CHRISTIAN! night'y place for me
A cup of water at your door;
I am that wanderer, doomed to be
The whirlwind's sport forevermore.
Not growing old through time so vast,
Its end my only hope forlorn;
Each night I pray may be the last,
But ever comes the hated morn.
Ever, ever,
Turns the world and I am hurled,
On forever and forever!

While eighteen centuries have rolled,
O'er Greek and Roman grandeur gone,
O'er wrecks of mighty realms of old
The fearful whirlwind drives me on.

Digitized by Google

I've looked on good which did not thrive,
While evil grew—a spreading tree—
I've seen (the old world to survive)
A new world rise from out the sea.
Ever, ever, &c.

If 'neath the arbutus in flower,
On grassy sward or by the wave,
I seek to rest one little hour,
I hear the furious whirlwind rave.
What boots it that the sullen sky
A moment wears its sombre vest?
Could less than all eternity
Afford from such a journey rest?
Ever, ever, &c.

Ah! many children, fair and gay
As once were mine, my sight engage;
But while I glance upon their play,
The whirlwind bursts with double rage.
Ye aged men! grieve not that time
Bends earthward every hoary head.
Look on those children—for my crime
My foot upon their dust shall tread!
Ever, ever, &c.

When of the walls where I was born,
I find some trace—a crumbled mass—
In vain I strive to stop and mourn,
The sudden whirlwind bids me pass.

Digitized by Google

And cries a voice from out the gloom,
"Live on till all things cease to be!
Here sleep thy sires, but in their tomb
There is no place, no rest for thee!"
Ever, ever, &c.

With brutal jeers I did deride
The man-god in his agony—
I feel the ground beneath me glide,
Again the whirlwind seizes me!
O ye who feel not pity's touch
Go tremble at a doom so strange;
Not wronged divinity so much
As human wrongs doth God avenge.
Ever, ever
Turns the world, and I am hurled,
On forever and forever.

GENIUS.

VICTOR HUGO.

Woe to that child of tenderness
Who in this world of fraud and force
Bears in his soul companionless
A ray from truth's eternal source!
Yes, woe! for envy's venomed tooth
Shall fasten on the unwary youth,
And like the fabled vulture dire,
As maddened by his happy song,
Torture the new Prometheus long
For having stolen the heavenly fire.

Digitized by Google

Or pleasure to his view reveals
Her charms to flatter and beguile ;
Well may he tremble when he feels
The power of that insidious smile.
Even as the glamored bird essays
To fly the serpent's glittering gaze
That lures the singer to destruction,
Awhile from bough to bough he flies
Irresolute, then yielding, dies
A victim to the bright seduction.

But if he compass his design
By forms of fadeless beauty led,—
If round his living brow they twine
The leaves which grow but for the dead,
Then, error, ignorance and hate—
Unholy traitors—lie in wait
To make the fond enthusiast falter ;
Even fame, his goddess, does not spare ;
She leads him to her temple fair
And immolates him on her altar.

Yet though misfortune ever kept
In store for such the scourge and chain,
Who would not joyously accept
Bright genius at the price of pain ?
What mortal, feeling through his frame
The thrill of that mysterious flame
Which lights afar the flood of time,
Would to the voice of caution hark,
And doubtful, think the future dark,
Whose very shadows are sublime ?

Digitized by Google

HAPPINESS.

FROM THE GERMAN.

A fleeting thing is happiness,
It will not long remain;
But they follow afar
Its delusive star
To find increasing pain.

Lay you down on the fragrant sward
And sing the sunny hour;
From the broad blue skies
Your half-shut eyes
May drink its silent power.

Then cherish it tenderly, secretly,
And speak not of the charm,
For song may allure
A spirit pure
That our common speech would alarm.

Digitized by Google

THE BALLAD OF THE BODENSEE.

SCHWAB.

(The tradition is that, during a winter of unusual severity in Switzerland, Lake Constance, (der Bodensee) was firmly frozen over, and that a traveller at nightfall, wishing to reach the opposite side, actually rode over the ice, mistaking its surface for a level plain.)

A HORSEMAN rides down the valley low
In a glimmering wilderness of snow.

Through the cold deep drift he speeds away
To reach the lake ere the close of day.

For his steed and he must be ferried o'er
This very night to the farther shore.

Away over buried bush and stone,
On a path untrodden, he rides alone.

The hill is past, and the level land
Stretches white and wide, like a plain of sand.

Far, far behind him are hamlet and town,
And his road leads neither up nor down.

And so for a mile or two he flies,
While the snow-birds shriek in the dusky skies.

The startled black-ducks flutter around,
But his ear can catch no other sound.

Digitized by Google

His eye can discern no living wight
To guide his doubtful course aright.

At length through the slowly deepening night
Shines out in the distance a twinkling light.

Then tree after tree the prospect fills,
And beyond them faintly rise the hills.

Over stock and stone with eager speed
He spurs more sharply his panting steed.

The watch-dogs soon at his coming bark,
And the village hearth-fires gladden the dark.

"Ho there! at the window, my little maid,
How far is it hence to the lake?" he said.

There was wonder on the maiden's brow
As she answered, "The lake is behind you now!

"And were it not for the ice afloat
On its tide, I should think you were just from the boat."

The stranger he shuddered, he breathed with pain.
"I have ridden hither across yon plain."

Then the maiden she lifted her hands and spake,
"Great God! you have ridden across the lake!

"You have dinted the thin and brittle roof
Of the bottomless pit with your horse's hoof.

Digitized by Google

"Did the water not gurgle beneath your track?
Did the ice give forth no warning crack?

"'Twas a miracle doomed you not to sleep,
The fishes' prey, in the chilly deep."

She rouses the village,—she calls aloud,
And the staring people around him crowd.

They give him their blessing, each gossip and wife;
"Dear man you may thank your stars for life!

"Come in by the fire, the table is spread,
You shall have the best of our beer and bread."

But the horseman neither spoke nor stirred.
"Across the lake" was all he had heard.

His heart stopped beating, his hair rose straight,
Around him seemed yawning the jaws of fate.

He saw the floods beneath him gush,
And his spirit sank in the icy crush.

A cold sweat drenched each powerless limb,
His glaring eyes grew fixed and dim.

He fell from his horse—one gasp he gave,
And that friendly shore was his frozen grave.

Digitized by Google

SPRING SONG.

FROM THE GERMAN.

THE earth reposes, and the chill
Of winter lingers over all;
She is not dead, she slumbers still
To wake at springtime's cheery call.

And as the babe, untouched with grief,
Sleeps on the fond maternal breast,
So sleep the embryo flower and leaf
Encradled in their silken nest.

They dream of mild and fragrant air,
Of jewelled eve and golden dawn;
They see, rejoicing everywhere,
The deep green wood, the grassy lawn.

They hear the merry birds aloft,
The brooklet close beside them, sing;
The butterflies caress them soft,
The murmuring bees unto them cling.

Then ope the flowers their wondrous eyes
To view the splendor far and near;
The glimmering dream that instant flies—
Behold the spring already here.

Digitized by Google

THE DESERTER'S FRIEND.

FROM THE GERMAN.

THE drum's dull beat and the signal gun
Announce the hour of the sentenced one.
Oh hasten the deed for the dear Lord's sake—
But let me not see it. My heart would break!

My comrade he, and my firmest friend
From our first proud march till this awful end.
Alas! am I ordered among the rest
For a deadly aim at his living breast?

He lifts for a moment his last sad gaze;
His face is bright with the sun's soft rays.
And see! how they cruelly bandage his eyes.
God open them quickly in Paradise!

Nine rifles sharp and shuddering speak;
Eight bullets have left each a bloody streak;
Not one of them in a fatal part,—
Thank God, it was mine that pierced his heart!

Digitized by Google

CUPID.

FROM ANACREON.

Cupid, as he softly lay
On a bed of roses gay,
By a bee, concealed among
The blushing flowers, was deeply stung.
Wild with pain, he straight withdrew
And to lovely Venus flew;
Wailing out in piteous cry
Mother! see, I faint, I die,
For that little wingèd thing,—
Insect with a serpent's sting,
Called by shepherd swains a bee—
Hath severely wounded me.
Then with looks and accents mild
Answered she the suffering child:
If so slight a thing can give
Anguish thus to make thee grieve,
Think how feels the wretched heart
Which thou piercest with thy dart.

Digitized by Google

COUNTRY LIFE.

HORACE, EPODE II.

How blest, remote from business strife,
Is he who leads a quiet life,
As did our sires—the happy dwellers
In cots with large potato cellars,—
Entirely free from all the din
Of this eternal age of tin!
No fire-alarms disturb his sleep—
He has no venture on the deep;
The midnight storm without may roar,
And hurl huge breakers on the shore,
They cannot even drown his snore!
The air he breathes is free from taint;
He lives unknown to pride's restraint.
He wisely shuns the courts of law
As he would shun a tiger's paw.
He has no money to invest,
So never has a hollow chest;—
He melts not down o'er cards and wine,
Nor heeds if shares and stocks decline.
With limbs inured to honest toil,
He cultivates paternal soil,
And many a busy hour devotes
To barley, turnips, beans and oats,
And sees his broad fields sprinkled over
And blushing rich with scented clover.

* * * * *

Digitized by Google

THE FRIGHTENED FAWN.

IMITATION OF HORACE.

"Vitas hinnuleo me similis," &c.

STAY, dearest, girl, nor longer shun
His look whom thine has wholly won;
But tell me what the cause can be
Why thus thou dost my presence flee.
So flies the fawn from fancied ills
To seek the lone and woody hills,
And till her watchful parent's near,
Will not relinquish idle fear.

And thou, while all secure from harm,
Art just as quick to take alarm;
The fawn though danger be not found,
Is frighted still by every sound:
The slightest rustle of the trees,
When moving to the fitful breeze
Each little moment, makes her start
With trembling limbs and beating heart.

Oh let my ravished eyes at least
Upon thy peerless beauty feast
Till thou had'st learned from vows as true
As ever pure affection knew,
To cast reserve and fears aside
And in a manly heart confide.

Digitized by Google

THE POWER OF THE POETS.

This is the rankest of heresies
The world ever harbored: Who told her
The poet's mission was only to please,
With his rouge and his roses for fashion and ease,
A creature whose milky veins would freeze
At a glimpse of her dread cold shoulder?

The bard is no growth like the slender vine
That graces a fashion journal,
All delicate, dainty and tinted fine—
But like the cedar, the oak and the pine,
He rises to grandeur which may not shine,
But which, nevertheless, is eternal.

His touch on the lover's lute is light,
But a stronger spirit teaches
His hands to war and his fingers to fight,
And his scorn to wither and blast and blight,
And when he stands up in his wrath and his might,
God pity the king he impeaches!

He is not moulded by any school,
Or marred by the critic's sentence;
His pen is the only efficient tool
To file and polish the public fool,
And carve the throne to a cutty stool
For a monarch's sore repentance.

Digitized by Google

How a guilty land from its luxury starts
When his warning note is sounded!
In royal cities and crowded marts,
His verses are javelins, arrows and darts
Tipped with Greek fire,—his targets are hearts
And thousands fall down wounded!

The firmest heart and the finest brain
The holiest message carry;
And they hear a voice, like a deep refrain,
Saying: "Write the vision and make it plain,
Then watch and wait; it is not in vain,
It shall come; it shall not tarry."

Then the man, so strange to the common crowd,
Came forth from his desert-dwelling
And shook false peace, as a thunder-cloud
Shakes the languid air in its fury loud,
To leave the earth with new life endowed
And with purer currents swelling.

Wide sovereignty does the poet wield
O'er every tribe and nation;
The truth to his ardent eyes revealed
Is a fountain closed and volume sealed
To men whose frittered lifetimes yield
But a moment's recreation.

Yes, there were giants in ancient Greece,
But the poet still governed each quarrel
Concerning a crown or a golden fleece,
And blood would flow or the combat cease
As he counselled war or commanded peace,
For the sceptre was less than the laurel!

Digitized by Google

'Twas then Archilochus' fiery zeal
The foot of Iambus, shod with steel,
Invented that terrible measure,
For crushing the hydra with its heel,
Compared with which the screws and the wheel
Were a positive kind of pleasure.

And little Tyrtæus, at first ignored
In his countrymen's martial muster,
By the patriot fire through his idyls poured,
Gave a firmer front to their ranks restored,
A keener edge to the Attic sword—
To his name undying lustre.

When the banished Dante's resentment woke
And summoned the shadowy legions,
He reigned supreme—'neath his master-stroke
The purple robe and the scarlet cloak
And the capo cornuto all vanished in smoke.
Consigned to the lower regions.

Piers Plowman,* tending his flocks in the dell,
Was a innocent object surely ;
But he chanted his rapt prophetic spell,
He flung one jeer and the giant fell,

* Robert Langlande, (1300,) wrote the *Visions of Piers Plowman*, a scathing satire on the religious orders. Those who have the gift, not of prophecy, but of discovery, think the suppression of the monasteries is foretold in these lines:

"Then shall the abbot of Abingdon,
And all his issue forever,
Have a knock of a ring
And incurable the wound."

Digitized by Google

And superstition was chased from her cell
Where she long had lurked securely.
Another thorn in the flesh of the clergy.

Young Skelton, too, when the sham devout
For the uppermost seat was struggling,
Right deftly laid the poetical knout
On the sheep-skinned shoulders of Colin Clout,
And turning his wolfish inside out,
Abolished his pastoral juggling.

Such is the poet's legitimate dower,
They are stupid who question it longer.
But the graces never forsake his dower
In his maddest moment or hottest hour,
For, though his hate has a terrible power,
His love is ten times stronger.

The world needs him now, and whether he springs
From the race-stock of Japhet or Simeon,
He shall come to his throne, not by blowing up kings,
But by sending the truth through our deep bosom-strings,
With his singing robes made of more beautiful things
Than the filigree dress of Endymion.*

* Alluding to D'Israeli's fustian novel of that name, then lately published.

Digitized by Google

NOEL—AN ODE.

[A tradition fondly preserved in the early church set forth that about the time of the birth of Christ a mysterious lamentation for the god Pan was heard all over Greece one calm evening. This omen was explained to mean the speedy extinction of the old Olympian faith.]

I.

LAMENT OF THE MUSES.

PHŒBUS car no longer shimmered
On the smooth Ionian brine,
Pale the star of evening glimmered
Over Delphi's darkened shrine.

Hellas, beautiful as ever,
Brooded in that twilight still;
But the soul of high endeavor
Moved no more her nerveless will.

Then, like ghostly garments trailing,
All the purple air was stirred
By a mystic sound of wailing
Deeply felt, but faintly heard.

Downward from the eagle's eyrie,
Upward from the Nereid's cave,
Joined in concert weird and dreary
Mourning sky and murmuring wave.

Till the multitudinous city
And the solitary plain,
Touched with awe and moved by pity,
Echoed back the sad refrain:

Digitized by Google

Pan is dead ! The life once throbbing
With the beautiful, is fled !
All the myrtle groves are sobbing
Pan is dead, is dead, is dead !

Ai ! for every sweet wild measure
Which the smooth-limbed graces led !—
Hushed is every sound of pleasure—
Pan is dead, great Pan is dead !

Ai ! for jocund hours once strewing
Gaia's lap with roses red.
Black the cypress-shade is growing—
Pan is dead, is dead, is dead !

Ai ! for lips that used to warble
Songs for Psyche's nuptial bed
Cold and silent is the marble—
Pan is dead, great Pan is dead !

Ai ! for Hebe bright and cheerful
When the Olympian feast was spread,
Dim her eyes are now and tearful,
Pan is dead, is dead, is, dead !

Ruthless fate descends to banish
Golden days and glorious lives.
See, they falter, fail and vanish,
Leaden grief alone survives !

Long had the sylvan god reigned.
Empires had flourished and waned ;
Pan and Apollo remained.

Digitized by Google

Now was their glory withdrawn.
Now were they vanished and gone.
Blindly the days must roll on!

Men were bewildered—but some
Asked whence the hero should come—
Asked of their oracles dumb.
Only the bard understood
How the Most Beautiful should
Dawn and abide with the Good.

II.

ANTHEM OF THE ANGELS.

Hark! a pæan that surpasses
What the stars of morning sung,
When they flamed in liquid masses
From the fount of glory flung.

Christ is born! The simple peasants
On the lonely Syrian hill
Felt the everlasting presence
In the message of good-will.

Sinai's voice was superseded
By the volant choir of love
In that highest service, needed
By the lowly, from above.

Vainly golden censers, swinging,
Fed the placid skies with balm;
Sweeter was the anthem bringing
To the troubled earth a calm.

Digitized by Google

Thrones had fallen, systems crumbled,
Fragile as the hnman clay ;
Brightest minds had groped and stumbled
Lacking love's divinest ray.

Now the hoary Eastern sages
Bade the nightly vigils cease,
As the altar-fires of ages
Paled before the dawn of peace.

And the rarest diamond-cluster
That imperial pomp adorns,
Lost the magic of its lustre
'Neath the cruel crown of thorns.

This fair triad still abideth
Faith and Hope and Charity
And for aye the last presideth
As the greatest of the three.

All the wild and wicked legions
Lurking still in fairest regions,
Startled, read their final summons
In the bright, auspicious omens,
Warning them to quit possession :

Heartless power and stern oppression,
Bigotry and superstition—
Grisly primates of perdition—
Private feud and public quarrel,
Murder, with the victor's laurel,

Digitized by Google

Flaunting pride and mad ambition,
Smooth-tongued fraud and dark suspicion,
Avarice, ign'rance, hate and error,
Routed from their reign of terror,
To their speedy doom are trooping
With their sable pennons drooping!

III.

THE HUMAN HYMN.

Hail to the morning awaited so long!
Spirit of gladness, attune every voice.
Discord shall never be heard in the song
Warm from the heart when the people rejoice.

Even the northwind is carolling loud
Over good wishes, glad greetings and gifts.
Earth has no cavern and heaven no cloud
But the pure sunshine is piercing its rifts.

While the dear folk-song is floating around
Every soul be like the musical glass—
Crystal and clear and alive with the sound,
Growing more sweet as the centuries pass.

Myrtle and bays with the holly shall twine,
As the old legends in harmony blend;
Friendly and freely, the land of the vine
Warmth to the land of the mayflower shall lend.

Oh, the world's faith is like that of a child,—
Fervent and firm in its dream-haunted prime,
Ripening to all that is joyous and mild,
As the red vintage is mellowed by time.

Digitized by Google

Fill, then, to feelings so generous and kind,
Cheering the old and inspiring the youth.
Fill to the perishless triumphs of mind—
Fill to our guests at the banquet of truth.

Not one bleak shade on our feast be allowed
From the green vales to the white-spreading drifts;
Gilding the cavern and brightening the cloud,
Sunshine and melody flow through the rifts!

THE REVERSION

NEW YEAR'S NIGHT, 1885.

"Is there no bright reversion in the sky
For those who nobly live or bravely die?"

'Twas when time's ceaseless surge,
On which all empires drive,
Was whitening on the verge
Of eighteen eighty-five;
I sate as in a dream
With darkness all around,
When lo! a ghostly gleam
Shot through the gloom profound.
It bridged the eternal sea,
It cleft night's ebon throne,
And opened even to me
A glimpse of the unknown.

Digitized by Google

Far down it I could see
A landing dimly vast,
Filled full as it could be
With shadows of the past.
It was that river's bank
That chills our journey hence,
Where power of purse and rank
Lose all pre-eminence.

Unearthly, wild and weird
Was that same shivering press,
While teasing sprites appeared
To heighten the distress;
For, ever drawing near,
Some victim they would grab,
Like, at a New York pier,
The imps of hack and cab.

Something was at my side
And whispered, 'Look and see
The men who stemmed the tide
Which founders scores like thee,—
The men who won the race
Of glory and of gain,
Who in their time and place
Did much, but did in vain.'

With sudden impulse seized,
I cried 'How ill or well
They did, I would be pleased
Could they approach and tell.'

Digitized by Google

Then did the shape retire
To bear them my request,
Swift as that magic wire
Throbs through the Atlantic's breast.

Instant there rose in air
A very numerous host,
Like gulls when gales severe
Drive them to throng the coast.
Each wore a convict's suit,
Each face was grimly stern,
And while I listened mute
Thus spoke they—each in turn :

'I was a monarch once—
A monarch ruling wide,
By that collective dunce,
My subjects, defied.
All pandered to my lust
While servile courtiers strove
To prove that my vile dust
Would outweigh mighty Jove.
But what prerogative
'Neath Pluto's iron reign
(Except his own) can live?
So all my power was vain.'

'I was a warrior bold.
The gaping world still reads,
In ponderous volumes told,
My superhuman deeds.

Digitized by Google

The peaceful village life,
Where hungry bale-fires roared,
Reddened that butcher-knife
Which glory calls a sword.
Did earth the current drink?
Behold my doom of pain
Writ with that crimson ink;—
Worse lived I than in vain.'

'I flourished in the schools.
My study was to bring
Out of ten thousand rules
One good and perfect thing.
Fool! that I never saw
With rapt, unlettered eyes,
Out of love's perfect law
Ten thousand joys arise!
I scanned night's page outspread
Above the Egyptian plain
And left my heart unread—
So I but lived in vain.'

'I reigned in beauty's bower—
The minion of delight,
Made by my very power
The slave of appetite.
But pleasure, like the spark,
Dies blackening to a stain.
Ah! death is doubly dark
When life has been in vain.'

Digitized by Google

'I read the stellar signs
And gave their mysteries out
In enigmatic lines,
Yet made it death to doubt.
But bondage of the mind
Is always insecure.
The spells that loose and bind
But for a night endure.
My cruel altar-fires
Were quenched by heaven's sweet rain,
And men who are not liars
Declare I lived in vain.'

'A legislator I,
Chief of the numerous tribe.
My place was very high—
Proportioned to the bribe.
The simplest law I made
Took ten men to explain,
And not one soul obeyed—
Both life and work were vain.'

'I, even I, was one
Of those same jurists, hired
To make the statutes run
As interest most required.
I bore the golden fleece
Across law's treacherous main.
But death has closed the lease,
And I have lived in vain.'

Digitized by Google

Then beckoned me a wight
All different from the rest
With locks of silvery white,
And hollow cheeks and chest;
And with a faltering pause,
He said, 'You could not guess
How opulent I was
To see me in this dress.
A thousand tenements
Ill-lodged the squalid souls,
Whose hard-extorted rents
Adorned my lengthy rolls.
I waxed so gross and great
I found I could not squeeze
In through the pearly gate,
Not even on knees.
My millions I bequeathed
Not to the needy train,
But—— mortal never breathed
The last of life more vain!'

Then that sad multitude
Together spoke and fast;
All had great things pursued
But here they were at last.
And with a wild adieu,
Chorused by many a groan,
They with their guide withdrew
And I was all alone.

Digitized by Google

Till, as approaching day
The new year onward led,
A voice from far away
In dulcet accents said :
'I was a bard by birth.
While strong hands made a prize
Of the fair spots of earth,
I pondered on the skies.
My soul was its own law—
No rulable machine—
I read in all I saw
A transcript of th' unseen
The vague idea wrought
Within me, keen and strong,
Till moulded into thought
And murmured out in song—
That deep but subtle power
Which on your lives may fall
And speed the heavy hour,
The lightsome one recall.

'Great nature's touches played
On all the finer chords.
While they the music made,
'Twas she supplied the words,—
Words, which by day and night
On viewless currents drift,
And to a safer height
Some drowning soul may lift,—

Digitized by Google

That neither pit nor cope
Shall press earth's surface near,
But leave firm ground for hope
Heavens-high, around the sphere.

'Where misery moaned unheard,
I soothed the aching sense;
Where causeless anger stirred,
I made it less intense.
What pained the tender lid
I tempered with a tear;
And what the clouds had hid
My fancy rendered clear.

'I urged the laggard mind
The hardest tasks to meet;
Where pleasure's path inclined,
I stayed the hasty feet.
I trained the silent bard
To strike an emulous note;
Where cruel discord jarred,
I stopped the brazen throat.

'I strewed my mental stores—
I had no stores but these—
And brought from foreign shores
The richest argosies.
What further need I tell?
Earth's most triumphant strain
Had been fair freedom's knell
If I had lived in vain!'

Digitized by Google

TO MISS HATTIE E. HOMER.

ONE YEAR OLD TO-DAY, FEB. 24, 1891.

FEBRUARY never looked
Half so brilliant, half so gay;
For a little prize he's booked,—
This Hattie's natal day.

Nothing happier can be found,
Prettier than a fairy elf;
Known to all for miles around,
Yet a stranger to herself.

This is being born to fame
Better than most lives have bought—
To be loved and known by name
Far beyond her world of thought!

She must also be, I think,
By the laughter-beaming eyes,
By the budding white and pink,
Quite a favorite with the skies.

So this morn, the royal sun,
When he started towards the west
Ordered all the hours to run
Gleeful as the summer's best.

Digitized by Google

Fleets of clouds that floated high
Had commands to sail and dip
All their pennons, passing by,
To her little ladyship.

And the waves of upper air
Hush each sound of wintry strife,
Only breathing out a prayer
For this opening voyage of life.

Heaven itself, now bending low,
Lets her touch with tiny hand
All the jewels in the bow
Glittering over baby-land.

I would like to mark the day
For this queen of little girls
With the brightest laureate lay
Polished as a string of pearls,

With such splendor in the words,
With such music in the tune,
As the sunshine and the birds
Lavish on a morn in June.*

* This very interesting child, daughter of Mr. A. C. Homer, of Barrington, died on the 16th of the May following.

Digitized by Google

THE SEA IN SUNSHINE.

CAPE SABLE LIGHT STATION, MAY 24, 1887

How calm is the measureless sea
That brightly and silently flows!
How dreadful its aspect can be
When aroused from deceitful repose!

Now tempting the tiniest sail
To follow the sunbeams afar;
Now mustering the merciless gale
To shiver the loftiest spar.

The brow of the sand-hill shows yet
The furrows deep-plowed by the storm
Where the two warring elements met
Over death in its dreadfullest form.

When the ocean uplifted its hand,
Its bosom with rage boiling o'er,
And smote the white lips of the land
Till they answered with angriest roar.

And after the fury was spent,
And the ripples played light with the foam,
How sad was the lasting lament
In many a desolate home!

Thus, after the passions subside
And our treasures lie shattered and torn,
As gaily our lives seem to glide,
But as deeply in secret we mourn.

Digitized by Google

CUPID'S CAREER.

FLOATING through the May-sky mild,
Stirring all the leaves with glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he, laughing, said to me:

'Sing a song about a maid.'
So I sang with merry cheer.
'Sing another song,' he said;
'Tell them who is reigning here.'

Then right loyally I wrought
Out the theme in rhymes uncouth,
Clothing every happy thought,
Not in poesy, but truth.

I.—IN THE LAND OF DELIGHT.

Where burning Sappho loved and sung.—*Byron.*

ON a day of orient splendor,
Little Love, inclined to rove
Through the foliage fresh and tender,
Fluttered on from grove to grove.

All was beautiful and sunny.
Vineyard slope and garden fair
Breathed their lavish wine and honey
Through the bright ambrosial air.

Digitized by Google

'Twas a fertile land and pleasant,
Bosomed in eternal spring,
Where the unmolested peasant
Dreaded neither mob nor king.

There were peaceful views of tillage
And of pastoral pursuits,
To the olive-girdled village
Leading through umbrageous routes.

Peacocks, in full glory blazing,
Ornamented park and lawn;
O'er the lake, superbly gazing
At her shadow, sailed the swan.

Oreads, on the purple highlands,
Roused the echoes with their play;
Nereids, round the fairy islands,
Revelled in the silvern spray.

In the boscage, faun and satyr
Footed many a merry jig,
Shaking down with ceaseless patter
Showers of apricot and fig.

And with sunlight on their faces,
Such as might the gods entrance,
Hand in hand, the lissome graces
Floated in the mazy dance.

Digitized by Google

With a slumbrous sound, the runnel,
From a far-off mountain source,
Slid along its tortuous tunnel
To the river's freer course.

O'er the velvet meadow whirling,
Bacchants held their roaring game,
Oft the tufted thyrsus hurling
To the mark with faultless aim.

Bands of youth and maidens, meeting
Where the smooth Eurotas ran,
Set its tremulous pulses beating
Faster, to the pipes of Pan.

O the pleasure in the sporting
Of this flower of Aryan folk!
O the rapture in the courting
Where nor vows nor hearts were broke!

Yet Love left the groves enchanted,
And the ever-happy fields.
Oh his silly bosom panted
For the joys new conquest yields!

Sometimes soaring, sometimes dancing,
Fearlessly he onward pressed;
Sometimes on a sunbeam glancing
Far along the loomy west.

Often in his airy motion,
Darting through some hazy wreath,
Knew he not if land or ocean
Towered or tumbled underneath.

Digitized by Google

II.—IN THE REGION OF UNREST.

In which it seemed a'ways afternoon.—*Tennyson.*

PRESENTLY the scene grew rougher.
He was getting far astray,
And his plumes began to suffer
From their contact with the clay.

Rueful apprehensions filled him.
What departure had he made?
Whence the bustling breeze that chilled him?
Could it be the northern trade?

Then he turned to seek his mother—
He was heedless, never blind—
But on this way and the other,
Home again he could not find.

In his sore-bewildered flying,
Oftentimes his track he crossed,
Ὀλλυμι, νη Δια'! crying—
Doric for 'oh dear, I'm lost!'

Nothing like his native Cyprus
Looked the landscape, though in spring;
Mists from rushy fens and viperous
Drenched the purple from his wing.

'Twas a champaign flat and dreary
Where he heard at close of day
No fond shepherd piping cheery,
No fair milkmaid's answering lay.

Digitized by Google

Every flying thing was nested,
Every creeping thing was housed,
But his wings, which never rested,
Not one touch of pity roused.

He was troubled and with reason;
He would perish in a year
Should it smite him with a season
Either sultry or severe.

Should he shiver, should he swelter
In the March or August air,
Nothing rose to promise shelter—
Scarce a friendly bush was there.

For the sad forsaken willow,
That had vainly wept and sighed,
On a thistle-padded pillow
Leaned its palsied limbs and died.

Doleful firs at distance scattered
Lodged the black ill-boding bird,
Where no vaulting squirrel chattered,
And no mottled partridge whirred.

He was tangled 'mid the branches
With the hammocked ravens round;
Nettles speared his naked haunches
When he bent them to the ground.

Digitized by Google

III.—IN THE SEAT OF SCIENCE.

Worin läuft das Volk so und schreit.—*Goethe.*

MIDNIGHT round the pole was muffled,
Darkness buried hill and wood,
When he came all limp and ruffled
Where a noble city stood.

He could see the hand of culture
That each stony structure crowned;
But he could not see the vulture
Pecking at Prometheus bound.

Here he surely thought to flourish
On an aliment refined,
But fair science had to nourish
Thousands who were really blind.

Here no poet, child of passion,
Moulded from chaotic strife
Beauty, and in godlike fashion
Filled it with the breath of life.

Not one champion literary
Would Love's praises celebrate,
But would laud a dignitary
At the advertising rate.

Hung with chaplets, hailed with cheering,
Many a public pillar stood;
All without was thin veneering,
All within was rotten wood!

Digitized by Google

Here the highest education
Wedded with the finest art;
But they had no registration
In the archives of the heart.

Solitude came not to sweeten
Breasts that long had ceased to feel,
Like the pavement, worn and beaten
By the crush of fortune's wheel.

Men who low to Mammon truckled,
Laughed Love's sanctity to scorn;
And the plutocratic cuckold
Gored him with a gilded horn.

Yet no foreign grace was wanting;
Stately dame and maiden fair,
In the gaudiest garments flaunting,
Haunted avenue and square.

Love of gold beside his locker,
Seeing the rival imp draw near,
Flung at him a cradle-rocker,
Broke his bow and drove him clear.

Soon he met another rival,
Painted to conceal a stain—
'Twas that lightning scarred survival
From the Cities of the Plain.

But no snares could intramural
Sirens ever round him weave,
He, as primitive and rural,
If not innocent, as Eve.

Digitized by Google

IV.—IN THE BOWER OF BLISS.

Whaur luve shall still be lord of a'.—*Scottish Song.*

PAST the villa, past the mansion,
Past the trim suburban pale,
Sped he under heaven's expansion
To a Nova Scotian vale.

There the dandelions twinkled
In the golden morning light;
And the skies their diamonds sprinkled
In the limpid pool at night.

There sometimes was heard the flowing
Of the gentle summer sea,
Soft as when o'er violets blowing
Drifts the murmur of the bee.

There the mossy fountain bubbled
'Neath the alders, clear as glass;
There the brooklet wound and doubled,
Bordered close with ribbon-grass.

There the orchard thick together
Wove and waved its blossoms gay,
As the emerald billows feather
Into snowy flakes of spray.

There, when labor's task was over,
Grateful was the hour of rest,
Solaced by the scent of clover
From the fields that heaven had blessed.

Digitized by Google

There the broad moon rose defining
Grassy slope and wooded height,
And the sinuous cove outlining
With its mildly-pencilled light.

There the honey-suckle, wreathing
Even the rock's forbidding brow,
From the red-lipped blooms were breathing
Incense sweet as girlhood's vow.

There the damsels, plump and pretty
As the rosebuds in the hedge,
Chanted many an artless ditty
That contained the dearest pledge.

There Rock Cottage, neatly modest,
Held within its snow-white walls
Rest the sweetest, peace the broadest
And the grace of lordly halls.

There the breast of lovely Jennie
Bade the vagrant fold his wing,
Grander now he reigns than any
Mortal conqueror or king.

Now his double bow is bended
From that more than queenly brow.—
All my roving days are ended,
I'm his happy subject now!

Digitized by Google

ARION.

Whoso offendeth one of these little ones * * * it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.— ***Holy Writ.***

To every master of chord and pipe
In a world new-risen from out the sea,
'Neath every star and every stripe
And the brave red-cross of the isle first free—
All loyal to sovereign harmony,—

I send this allegory; a type
From the land of immortal thought and deed,
The fruit of whose marvellous mind was ripe
Two thousand years ere the wingèd steed
Prepared the American wilds for its seed.

I.

Briskly the evening gale, sweet from the orange-vale,
Piped to the dancing sail
Of the Greek trader.
Broadly the billows laughed, chasing the little craft,
Pressing her fore and aft
Only to speed her.

Dimly as on they bore, sank the Italian shore
Whence with his treasure-store
But with fame grander,
Dainty Arion then messed with those merchantmen,
Wishing to greet again
Brave Periander.

Digitized by Google

Long had his famous lyre, envy of Phœbus' choir,
Gilded like Ætna's fire
What the night darkened.
Long had its wizard strings ravished from lords and kings
Gewgaws and diamond rings
While they had hearkened.

Oh! it was great to see how its careering glee,
Buoyant and bounding free,
Captured the Stoic;
How the staccato pitch made the lean muscles twitch—
Those facial muscles which
Posed for heroic!

Oft did its touch allure even the Epicure,
Leaving his turbot-skewer
Only half eat out,
Sorely perplexed to tell how such delights could dwell
Inside a turtle-shell
With all the meat out!

Every distinction sank, levelled was every rank;
While the rich stream they drank,
Nobles and peasants,
Owning the minstrel's power, thronged him in hall and bower,
Thick at his feet to shower
Honors and presents.

Still did Arion long after the home of song.
Corinth, the fair and strong,—
Glory had planned her;—

Digitized by Google

Corinth, how proud she was under a ruler's laws
Foremost in freedom's cause,
Wise Periander !
He was the singer's friend. He would his hand extend,
Scorning the knees that bend
Only to flatter.—
Friendship which, high and warm, genius is led to form
Over the common swarm,
Nothing can shatter.

Then the dear Lesbian strand, where the disrobing sand
Let the sea's jewelled hand
Toy with its treasures;
Oft 'neath the western star thrumming on reef and bar
As on a broad guitar
Soft-lulling measures.

Thence was Arion's art. Nature's full-beating heart
Formed the great music chart
Which he had pondered.
Thither, as flies the bird, every fond feeling stirred,
Daily his thought recurred
While he had wandered.

Softly he sank to rest, rocked in that ocean-nest,
Served as a welcome guest,
Not as a stranger.
Through the gold haze of dreams, there were no dagger-gleams,
There were no gaping seams—
There was no danger.

Digitized by Google

II.

But ah! when daylight hides its face,
Crime creeps from out its lurking place.
There rose that night a ghastly deed
From the skulking, black, cold heart of greed.
Both watches that night at once were kept.
The crew conspired. The victim slept.
"Is it not a most unnatural thing,"
They said, "for a poet to live like a king?
What practical talent has he displayed?
What has he done for promoting trade?
Is not the solid tact for gain
A higher gift and worth as much
As the flimsy substance they call the brain
When it runs to a delicate taste or touch?
Yes—the primitive law of nature's reign
Is the brightest prize to the strongest clutch.
Durable things, but void of beauty,
Fulfil the most important duty.
The Illyrian pines for ages last
Without one blossom of their own,
In rifted granite anchored fast,
With bristly bough and bur-like cone.
They form the oar, the keel, the mast—
They keys that open every zone.
While the flowers that morbid mildness please,
Those bubbles of earth by the young spring blown,
Dance in the sunlight, but break in the breeze,
Least fitted by nature to hold their own."

Digitized by Google

This is the way their comment ran,
Lower and deeper from man to man.
How broad is the interval between
Them and the modern merchant marine,
The men whom danger has rendered brave,
By whom Britannia rules the wave.
Whose sails, like the olive branch of peace,
Are fluttering over the golden fleece ;
In whose tossing argosies, foreign lands
With friendliest greeting are shaking hands.
To alien interests so faithful and just,
The lives 'neath their charge are a sacred trust.
But those ancient pests of each neighboring shore
Were maritime pedlars, and nothing more,
Of whom the apostle might truly speak
That there was no difference 'twixt Jew and Greek.
By the shortest route to the basest ends,
They plundered the strangers and cheated their friends.
The venture they carried was wholly their own,
And they wrangled about it like dogs o'er a bone,
'Till the wealth of another attracted their eyes,
Then a combine soon bound them in brotherly ties,
As a high tariff trust to its principle cleaves—
Such is the honor still found among thieves !

But who had surmised that the captain, too,
Would aid and abet his assassin crew ?
He held himself at the loftiest worth,
Both as salt of the sea and as salt of the earth.
For fifty years in harness and straps,
And half of that period in gold-laced caps,
He had navigated, with one slight lapse,

Digitized by Google

The greyhound of the blue Ionian.
Surely he would not kill or steal,
Lucre he loved but he hated theft,
Still there was something made him feel
Once Arion had stepped aside—
Once he was safely under the keel,
Himself and the company might divide
The trifles and trinkets that might be left.

In the midnight watch, in the dark profound,
They began to whisper these thoughts around,
But the east to an ashen grey had changed,
Ere their purpose was fixed and the plot arranged.
The morning crept o'er its threshold red,
With a sombre canopy overhead;
From its open portal there issued a flaw
Preceded by vague airs, rude and raw.
Blackly it moved on its western course
Till the galliot shivered to feel its force.
First gracefully onward she glided and heeled,
Then as the ridges arose more steep,
Faster and wilder, she plunged and reeled,
Like a hunted elephant over a field
With a pitfall yawning at every leap.
Yet the gale which quickened the galliot's speed,
But hastened the pirates' dastardly deed.

Arion awoke at their stealthy tread;
His fate in their wolfish looks he read.
But oh! it was harsh when the sentence severe
Beat a death-drum in his musical ear!
Instead of the plaudits that formerly rose,
Echoing every harmonious close,

Digitized by Google

Curtly the awful change was rung
Up to the clouds that menacing hung,
Bidding him take from their hands his doom,
Or find at the bottom a self-sought tomb.
Only one moment the fell disclosure
Ruffled the singer's divine composure ;
Then his clear spirit, so proudly serene,
Ruled, in its dignity, feature and mien.
Thus, a fish hawk's swoop for an instant may shake
The pictured heaven in a summer lake ;
But quickly the ripples are smoothed away,
Leaving no trace of the bird of prey.

Nothing was granted but five minutes' leave
For him to dress in his finest array
Ere the rank weeds of the bottom should weave
Round him a mantle that never gives way.
Soon he emerged from the cabin beneath,
Wearing his singing robes, crowned with a wreath
Fashioned like laurel, but wrought of pure gold ;
Loose around forehead and cheek and neck
Floated the auburn curls, fair to behold ;
Firmly he trod o'er the tilting deck,
High on the quarter taking his stand,
Holding the wonderful lyre in his hand.

Majestic soul that will not stoop
To the king of terrors ! He stood in splendor,
Facing the cursed, compassionless group,
The Nile-horse less horrid, the jackal more tender.
Brute meanness looked from the lower flat
Of the lumpish cranium, stolidly fat ;

Digitized by Google

From the cat-like optic that shuts at the light,
But widens and watches and preys in the night;
From the soulless orb in a formless waste—
The great dull seal of a sordid taste;
From the snaky lights 'neath the jutting brow,
Outstaring the Gorgon upon the prow.
Arion gave them a look to chill
Their blood into something icier still;
Then, with the grandeur that peril inspires
In a brave bosom, he touched the bright wires;
But soft as a lover's caress was the stroke
Which the prime outgush of melody woke.

III.

At the first quaver, the dismal scud
 Stopped in its flight and began to unfold,
Like a huge tree-flower bursting its bud,
 Overlapped petals of carmine and gold.

Fell on the waves an ominous calm,
 And the tall mast on the lonely main
Stood like a solitary palm
 Rooted fast in a boundless plain.

But a creeping vapor, chill and dim,
 Seemed slowly to rise from the surface dark,
Wavering o'er the horizon's rim
 And draping the hull of the hellish bark.

Digitized by Google

IV.

WITH rising power and with billowy swell
The lyre exerted its marvellous spell;
And the waters, to starboard, to port and astern,
And ahead,—as far as the eye could discern,
Were dimpled and rippled and ruffled and splashed
By a thousand fins that thronged and flashed
Through the gloom, like the spears of a body-guard
Summoned by Neptune to shield the bard.

V.

'TWAS the moment supreme;
Eternity called him,
Dispelling the dream
That long had enthralled him.
So savagely torn
From the summit of pleasure;
So proudly upborne
By a strength beyond measure.
As the terrible force
Which the firm mountain shivers
Unprisons the source
Of the mightiest rivers,
So the heart undergoes
The cruellest spasm,
But fuller life flows
From the desolate chasm.
Confronting stern fate
In that dread moment lowering,
Erect and elate,
Arion stood towering.

Digitized by Google

The shadow it flings
O'er his countenance flitted ;
The rush of its wings
From his lyre was emitted.

As the mind overstreams
The vast spaces that sever
The hidden extremes
Of the awful forever,—
The fear-haunted deep
Its harmony sounded ;
With confident sweep
To the heavens it bounded.

The sombre skies flushed
At its pathos controlling;
The tempest was hushed
In the distance down-rolling ;
The clouds made a pause
While the music ascended,
To thunder applause
As soon as it ended.

VI.

ARION ceased ; the wires were stilled,
Their vibrant waves the vault yet filled,
With infinite eddying echoes whirled
Round the sapphire cliffs of the upper world.

As a spiral column of water lifts
Its head at the touch of the dread cyclone
High in the air, and wavers and shifts
And spreads to a mammoth inverted cone,

Digitized by Google

Then while it rapidly revolves,
The mighty spectacle dissolves
In a sky-Niagara roaring loud
From a riven continent of cloud;
So the masterful strain, that seemed to float
As if from the final trumpet's throat,
In a gathered volume, returning, fell
On the craven souls like their own death-knell.
Then, clasping his instrument close to his heart,
Of which it was really the resonant part,
And casting towards Corinth a farewell look,
The minstrel took
A fearless leap
Into the breathless and shuddering deep!

VII.

Oh ultimate horror and anguish—to drown!
Sinking and deepening, down, down, down!
To see the green deluge above you curled,
Thrusting you down from the light of this world,
Till the stifling weight of the deep is pressed
On the straining sight and the laboring breast,
And the deafening surf of a hundred shores
On the tense and bursting ear-drum pours;
To feel, in the sea-weeds that round you float,
Death's icy clutch on your panting throat,—
The deeds of a life-time, so horribly plain,
All focussed and flashed through the quivering brain;
To struggle so madly, with nothing to grasp,
While the cry at your heart bubbles forth in a gasp;

Digitized by Google

Then the flickering sparks in the darkness dense
That slowly envelops the swooning sense,
And, merging the present, the future and past,
Drowsily drifts to the void and the vast,
And still more dizzy, more dim, more deep,
To shudder and lapse into endless sleep!
Grim gateway of silence,—it makes the flesh creep!

VIII.

Ah! little those sons of rapacity cared
For the life of the bard or his final repose.
They swore by the Styx when the treasure was shared,
They would never one word of the secret disclose.

The ominous frown from the sky soon cleared;
The west wind came singing, so cheerful and soft;
Before it the vessel in safety careered,
And ere sundown the land was descried from aloft.

The shipmen were glad as they entered the bay,
And vowed that as soon as the frolicsome sod
Was pressed by their innocent feet, they would slay
A black sheep and lamb to the surly sea-god.

IX.

That sacrifice was never made.
That pious vow was never paid.
The sea-god pressing for his due,
Soon had a capias on the crew.

Digitized by Google

As folds the circling gull its wing
And settles on the bastioned rock,
With handed sail and easy swing
The galliot grounded in her dock.
Invited then to make report
Forthwith at Periander's court,
Thither the mariners repaired
With blushless brows politely bared.
They found the chief in lordly state;
He bade them all their voyage relate,
And asked, with tenderest concern,
What of Arion they could learn.
"He lives," broke forth the vocal chime,
"He flourishes in myrtle-glades
Enamored of the lazy clime
And of the lively Tuscan maids,
Too great to feel himself exiled
From Corinth." Periander smiled.
"He lives—he loves; then all is well,"
He said, and touched a silver bell.
Uprolled the rich-embroidered baize—
Arion stood before their gaze!
Effulgent in his court attire,
With golden crown and rose-wreathed lyre.

They would have fled, but seized and chained
By terror, motionless remained,
With palsied limb and vacant stare
Of guilt, surprise and blank despair;
Tasting the bitterness of death,
Indrawn with every jerky breath.

Digitized by Google

And silence like the tomb prevailed
Till Periander said:
"Falsehood and murder hand in hand,
How has your dastard purpose failed!
Behold the deed in darkness planned
To open justice led!
Ye could not to the deep consign
This favorite of the skies;
Smit with his melody divine,
The very monsters of the brine
In his defence arise!
And, fleet as ever courser speeds
To bring the news of mighty deeds,
The heaven-deputed dolphin bore
Arion safe to Corinth's shore:
For him the proudest honors wait—
For you the felon's gloomiest fate!"

When next the grey dawn scaled the steep
It saw in the west, like a faint white cloud
Vanishing over the tremulous deep,
An outbound ship. The piratical crowd
Lay on her deck in a helpless heap,
Shackled and rigid with mortal fear;
For the black-robed pilot had orders to steer
As close as he might to the very spot
Which had witnessed their own infernal plot;
And that place and their doom were drawing near.
How chilly, how different ran their blood
From the genial current they would have spilt!
Their plunge in the cold eternal flood
Was to whiten their bones but not their guilt,

Digitized by Google

And of what did their ornament consist
As they were dipped from the quarter deck?
A bracelet of iron around each wrist,
And a millstone ruffle around each neck!

THE CLERICAL QUACK.

When is forbearanee no longer a virtue?
Not when leagued slander leads on the attack,
Not when mean malice is trying to hurt you,
But when you're bored by a clerical quack.

What! are there many such characters, turning
Fact into fable and white into black?—
Yes; this old planet is still young in learning
How to distinguish a clerical quack.

Oh he is known by the brimstone aroma
Rising without any limit or lack.
Such a man never is worth a diploma,
He is at best but a clerical quack.

Show me a parson who twisteth the letter
Of the old law into thumbscrew and rack,
As the best method of making men better—
Then I shall show you a clerical quack.

When he is itching to set on his forehead
Aaron's tiara that fitteth him slack,
Labelled with "holiness unto the Lorrud,"
That is the badge of a clerical quack.

Digitized by Google

Soon as he telleth with fervor and unction
How his pure message was mighty to crack
All the hard heads in the purlieus of Moncton,
Mark him right down for a clerical quack.

Soon as you hear him, whose pillow is watered
Over the soul of the savage Kanak,*
Singing *Te Deums* o'er Soudanese slaughtered,
Brand him at once as a clerical quack.

Perched on the chariot of Zion on Sunday,
Cursing the sinner who taketh a hack,
Walking in faith with the pure Mrs. Grundy,
That is the style of the clerical quack.

When the poor jack-daw parades as a Greekling
Publicly boasting his classical knack,†
Pluck but a plume from the garrulous weakling,
Then you behold him—a clerical quack.

When our green crop of wild oats he is firing,
Even as a tramp setteth fire to a stack,
Watch him; there's no other creature requiring
Such a stern check as the clerical quack.

Give your last dime to the sharper who robs you,
Pocket an insult and fling it not back,
Turn t'other cheek to the rowdy who mobs you,
Still declare war on the clerical quack.

* It is a sad mark of consistency when good men rejoice at the massacre of semi-civilized Arabs, and yet offer themselves as ragouts to the South Sea cannibals.

† The difference, however, between Graculus and Græculus is only that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Digitized by Google

TO COUNT TOLSTOI.

[These stanzas are supposed to be addressed to Count Lyof N. Tolstoï, the distinguished Russian writer, and author of the "Kreutzer Sonata." This work, though full of tragic interest and powerfully written, does the noble count no credit. Its object was to show by a series of revolting incidents, ending in a horrible domestic tragedy, that love between the sexes is in any case immoral, and marriage a certain calamity.]

TOUCH glasses, most unknightly count,
But touch them from the shoulder;
Mine brimming from Castalia's fount,
Yours filled with something colder.

It glistens much like Arctic brine;
You may as well withdraw it.
The nectar is not quite divine—
It needs a hell to thaw it!

It bled not from the glowing grape;
It breeds no dreams Elysian;
Its vapors take a goblin shape
That kills the beauteous vision!

Poor Posdnicheff,* it makes him look
A thousand times absurder
To feel its climax when he took
His first degree—in murder!

* The hero, or rather, the criminal of the story.

Digitized by Google

Nor heart, nor soul his life adorns
Through all the sad narration,
But he excels in fancied horns
The beast in Revelation.

And can you take the madman's part,
Or share his crude convictions,
So lacking in the lover's art,
So full of contradictions?

Yet every voice in nature's choir,
To gentle measures heated,
Must celebrate that blessed fire
Of which the gods were cheated.

For this is nature's noblest, this
Her Eden education,
Which flashes pure electric bliss
Through cycles of creation.

Thus love, although on earth it glows,
Is heaven-ward in direction—
A sacred flower whose fruitage shows
In conjugal affection.

Love, that has ruled this world so long,
Is neither stale nor stealthy,
It keeps the vital current strong,
The moral fibre healthy.

No language frames a sweeter word;
No theme is more alluring;
No lofty soul was ever stirred
By pleasure more enduring.

Digitized by Google

No nation, entered for the race
Of glory, ever halted
While female modesty and grace
Were to the heavens exalted.

That fire, which for the kneaded dust
Prometheus stole from heaven,
May never penetrate the crust
Of Pharasaic leaven.

In many a cottage home it smiles
By winter drifts surrounded;
It adds a charm to palmy isles
On coral fret-work founded.

That gentle flame! for low and high
I recognise its fitness,
As were I not extremely shy,
My constant song should witness.

Oh flute it, while the mist upcurls
From morning's pure carnation
Which every flowering slip impearls
In nuptial decoration.

Oh chant it in the ardent noons
When heaven and earth are wedded
In forests hung with gay festoons,
On verdant mosses bedded.

And trill it when the evening skies
Restore to full dominion
The dimpled god with starry eyes,
Keen shaft and purple pinion!

Digitized by Google

Once, when Aurora's tears were wiped
By radiant-faced Apollo,
I won their favor while I piped
The artless notes that follow :

SONG.

A MISTRESS fair, a glass of wine
Hold empire o'er this heart of mine,
Which in its rebel mood defies
All, all except the tenderest ties.
The choicest of poetic themes,
The sweetest of romantic dreams
Are blended in this single line—
A mistress fair, a glass of wine !

When destiny first parcelled earth
In liberal shares to wealth and birth,
The meanest creatures got some taste
Of happiness that flowed at waste.
But when the loitering bard arrived,
Of earthly heritage deprived,
She gave, to crown the whole design,
A mistress fair, a glass of wine.

They are the two enchanting things
That steal the down from pleasure's wings,
Alike to stay its rapid flight
And spread the couch of soft delight.
Without their presence to inspire,
How dull the lute, how dumb the lyre !
What made Anacreon's song divine ?
A mistress fair, a glass of wine.

Digitized by Google

What force of wisdom or of arms
Is proof against their honeyed charms?
The wisest king that ever ruled,
In piety and prudence schooled,
Could never tune his harp above
The cooing of the turtle-dove,
Nor place below the golden shrine
A mistress fair, a glass of wine!

The matchless Macedonian boy,
Whose soul was steeled to vulgar joy,
Stood on the heights of dread renown
And trampled mightiest monarchs down.
But Thais' lovely bust outshone
The ivory of the Persian throne,
And still above its ruin shine
A mistress fair, a glass of wine!

The peasant bard, (forgive this tear),
To Scotland and to nature dear,
Was born with sweetest spell to bind
The captive souls of all mankind.
The wreath which Coila's hand bestows
With never-dying lustre glows,
But brightest where these two entwine—
A mistress fair, a glass of wine!

When England's strongest noble swept
The chords where love and terror slept,
And roused them to a loftier tone
Than e'er before or since was known;

Digitized by Google

His genius, paling from the skies,
Illumined for admiring eyes
Those twin stars o'er a sun's decline—
A mistress fair, a glass of wine!

O genius! how superbly near
It brings the ploughman to the peer,
Till worlds that glimmered on the sight
Receive from them full warmth and light.
And yet its most resplendent ray
Would fail to animate the clay
Without those founts of all that's fine—
A mistress fair, a glass of wine.

AT SEA.

The darkened sea before us lies,
The coast-lights far away receding;
The mist is gathering to my eyes
And my lone heart is inly bleeding.

'Tis not that fate with frown severe
Pursues me with its wonted malice;
'Tis not for dangers gathering near—
'Tis leaving thee, my darling Alice.

Digitized by Google

No harsher doom the bell could speak
Above the stony dungeon pealing;
No deeper vengeance hate could wreak
Upon the quivering chords of feeling.

When death, the last of many a pain,
Holds to my lips its icy chalice,
Less bitter will it be to drain
Than leaving thee, my darling Alice.

DARWIN.

[Charles Robert Darwin, author of the "Origin of Species," the foremost scientist of modern times, died at his home in Down, Kent, April 19, 1882. "On the Wednesday morning next after his death, his remains were borne with unwonted marks of respect and ceremony, in the assembled presence of all that was noble and good in Britain, to an honored grave in the precincts of the great Abbey (Westminster). Wallace and Huxley, Lubbock and Hooker, his nearest peers in the domain of pure science, stood among the bearers who held the pall. Lowell represented the republic of America and of letters. Statesmen and poets, philosophers and theologians mingled with the throng of scientific thinkers who crowded close to the venerated bier. No incident of fitting pomp or dignity was wanting, as the organ pealed out in solemn strains the special anthem composed for the occasion to the appropriate words of the Hebrew poet, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom." Even the narrow Philistine intelligence itself, which still knew Darwin only as the man who thought we were all descended from monkeys, was impressed with the sole standard of greatness open to its feeble and shallow comprehension by the mere solemnity and ceremony of the occasion, and began to enquire with blind wonderment, what this thinker had done whom a whole people thus delighted to honor."—*Grant Allen.*]

Digitized by Google

THE abbey lays him with the mitred dead,
Among her treasured relics not the least.
The holy earth, which has such discords bred,
Unites at last philosopher and priest.

The work which he was born to do is done.
The long-sought light is breaking by degrees.
Can life not bring all issues out of one,
When death can blend such opposites as these?

The noble-minded group around the bier
In mournful silence pay the last respects,
While even the masses have no ear to hear
The loud-mouthed leaders of the narrow sects.

No fierce anathema, no spiteful ban
Disturbs his dust with breath of sulphurous fire;
But sweetly solemn "Happy is the man
That findeth wisdom" chants the sacred choir!

He brushed the cobwebs of caprice and chance
From nature's dome, and showed that order reigns
But to be known, while leaden ignorance
A miracle unto itself remains.

He rolled the cloudy bounds of chaos back
Farther than inspiration ever saw
And reared o'er Being's multifarious track
The luminous banner of unswerving law.

No greater spirit was the Genoese
Flying his ensign o'er a deep uncrossed,
While saintship pointed to the grim decrees
And friendship, weeping, gave him up for lost.

Digitized by Google

Before him lay a new world, and behind
The theosophs who swore the earth was flat,
But he had seen a shadow-sphere defined
Upon the moon, and based his hope on that.

He looked to heaven, and his words were bold—
Flashing that light which guides all glorious search—
He cried: "The church condemns me, but I hold
By such a shadow more than by the church!"*

Our own discoverer dared and did as much.
No common merchandise his voyage sought;
And after him, our feebler minds may touch
A virgin continent of endless thought.

Thus truth advances, and our faith grows firm
To see one cosmic principle displayed,
Even from the faintest infusorial germ
To the full man in God's own image made.

Hail, then, the upward tendency of life!
Far better than in dolorous tones to tell
That man through centuries of pain and strife
Has not yet struggled up to whence he fell!

Finding its bond with every sentient thing,
The immortal intellect is throned and crowned
To raise men nearer to the skies and brings
The Ephesian workshop nearer to the ground.

* I believe this remark was made by Magellan, the Portuguese navigator, and not by Columbus, to whom I have here attributed it. Had the Genoese really been guilty of such irreverence, he would scarcely have been canonized, even at this late day.

Digitized by Google

SUNRISE.

THE age of the gods is past,
The reign of man is begun ;
And the spectres are vanishing fast
'Neath the still ascending sun.

The apostles of fear and of force,
Though armed with celestial might,
Have finished their infamous course—
Have lost the unnatural fight.

Opinions, once rooted so deep,
And over-shadowing all,
Have felt the morn-breezes sweep
And are swaying to their fall.

Old power, once held to be firm
As the everlasting hills,
Is reluctantly nearing its term
As the popular mandate wills.

Less bitter the sectary's strife,
More wholesome the social breath
As the growing hope in life
Is supplanting the hope in death.

Digitized by Google

No tyrant's mock-thunder has stilled
The watchword by liberty given,
But her mission will not be fulfilled
Till the last ancient fetter is riven—

Till not one heart that has bled
Shall longer be trodden down,
And not one human head
Shall put itself up for a crown.

ORIENTAL.

JULY, 1876.

O'ER the vineyards of the east,
Hounding to the bloody feast,
See the turbans and the crescent
Throng and wave;
Hear the yells of Allah rise
Mingled with the victims' cries—
And is there no succor present,
Is there no strong arm to save?

Where is the avenging sword
When the ruthless Tartar horde
On each undefended village
Wreak their rage;
When, in hellish triumph bold,
Hard by freedom's seat of old
Murder, leagued with rape and pillage,
Stains the earth and shocks the age?

Digitized by Google

Ruin crushes down the land
With a red, relentless hand;
Ghastly trophies of the slaughter
Mark its way;
Turks exult, while angels weep
Over many a festering heap—
Age and childhood, mother, daughter,
Mangled like the tiger's prey!

By their fierce and sensual creed,
In each fiendish murder-deed
They are sure of upper glory
Who excel.
Shall they flaunt that Arab lie
In the face of freedom's sky,
That the unsparing blade and gory
Is the key of heaven and hell?

Can the nations, trained to know
Right from wrong, be slack and slow
And divided in opinion
Of the case?
Heaven's everlasting laws
Justify that people's cause
Rising 'gainst the vile dominion
Of a cruel Tartar race.

How the free, enlightened soul
Spurns the thought of such control!
Mussulmans, as tame as camels
To the rod
Which some pampered eunuch wields,

Digitized by Google

They despoiling Europe's fields
To enforce their odious trammels—
Oh forbid it, Europe's God!

Not in vain shall misery plead,
And not long shall Servia bleed.
Armed, decisive intervention
Is at hand,
And the sultan soon must seek
Friendship with some wandering sheik,
With his empire's full extension
By a desert tent-cloth spanned.

England, to the victim's aid,
Prone beneath a barbarous raid,
Let the war trump's throat of thunder
Call thy bands,
And while Cœur-de-Lion's shade
Waves the heaven-annointed blade,
Drive the Asian beast of plunder
Backward to his native sands!

Digitized by Google

JOHN BURNS, OF LONDON.

DEFENDER of down-trodden right,
Strong both to act and speak,—
The hireling arm of ruling might,
Uplifted yet, forbears to smite
You on the other cheek.

Now blessings on the wider range
And keener touch of thought!
To this is due the sudden change,
This modern miracle as strange
As ever wizard wrought.

The name of Burns, the socialist,
So late with terror heard—
A day star dimmed by London mist,
By law and gospel loathed and hissed,—
Becomes a household word!

O happier tribune of the plebs
Than chaste Cornelia's sons,*
Who tore the social spider-webs,
For here no vein of valor ebbs,
Nor red with slaughter runs.

* Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, tribunes of the people in old Rome, were both murdered for advocating the popular cause against the tyrannical aristocracy.

Digitized by Google

Authority has now on tap
Her soul's most generous wine;
With batons dangling to the strap,
Her servants lift to him the cap
That bears the civic sign.

She hears the famished cry for bread
Nor will she give a stone;
Nor see the leader captive led,
Nor club an unoffending head,
And haply risk her own.

That land is sown with dragon's teeth
Where wealth alone is great,
And millions, toiling far beneath,
Own nothing that they can bequeath,
But blind and bitter hate.

Learn, Britain, to avert such ill;
The world's best future turns
On hands that heavy tasks fulfil
With cheerful mind and earnest will—
On workingmen like Burns.

Digitized by Google

THE PEOPLE FIRST.

I.

FAR as the bright sun gilds
The lowly cot, or builds
The seven-hued arch,
We celebrate and toast
The great victorious host
Who do and suffer most
In life's grand march.

II.

We raise no murder-shout,
We fling no banners out
O'er mobs accursed ;
But to each continent
O'er ocean's vast extent,
This greeting shall be sent :
The people first !

III.

For them, and them alone,
And not for any throne
Superbly carved,
Shall heart and hand and brain
The ordered state maintain
Without one foeman slain,
One subject starved.

Digitized by Google

IV.

True lordship of the soil
Is in the drops of toil
That gem the brow,
And in such arms as broke
The galling feudal yoke
And made the common folk
What they are now.

V.

The truly royal dames
From no emblazoned names
Derive their worth.
Where love has crowned them queens
Of sweet domestic scenes
They nurse untitled weans
To govern earth.

VI.

Then fill the social bowl
To every generous soul
Born to be free;
While we behind us cast
The ducal lines long past
With hope set firm and fast
On those to be.

Digitized by Google

VII.

King, emperor, sultan, czar,
And each attendant star
Pale from the skies;
While o'er the palace wall
There runs the fateful scrawl
Foredooming it to fall
That man may rise!

— ———

THE DOOM OF ROMANOFF.

ALEXANDER II. OF RUSSIA, KILLED MARCH 13, 1881.

HARK! what was that terrific jar
That shocked the steadfast northern star,
And rattled hell both bolt and bar?
"The Nihilists have killed the czar!"
And fast and faster
Through teeming, turmoiled Europe spreads
That thunder-crash for kingly heads:
"The Nihilists, the rampant Reds,
Have blown to atoms, torn to shreds
Their lord and master!"*

* Swinburne rather savagely imprecates the same awful visitation on the hopeful seed thus:

"God or man, be swift; hope sickens with delay.
Smite, and send him howling down his father's way.
Down the way of czars, so long in vain deferred,
Let the second Alexander light the third!"

Digitized by Google

Ye guardians of the royal lair,
Turn out and form a hollow square
Around your broken idol there!
Beat back the haggard hordes that stare,
Both man and woman.
Ay, shower them with metallic grape
Lest this foul secret should escape:
The autocrat, that tried to ape
The immortal gods, has lost the shape
That marked him human!

Ay, they had fenced with stone and steel
The man who knew not how to feel
For millions 'neath his iron heel;
But spite of mercenary zeal,
The deadly nitre
That fills the whistling little sphere
And blanches twenty thrones with fear,
Has stopped the despot's high career
And stretched him on a snowy bier
With features whiter.

Pity and horror on us seize.
Behold the royal remnants!—these:
The shredded flesh, the shattered knees,
The rivulets of blood that freeze
Along the gutters,
And whilst they trickle warmly still,
Are trodden in, and send a chill
Through fur-clad minions trained to kill,
Who bend to catch the sovereign will
He feebly utters!

Digitized by Google

Is there a mortal eye that can,
Unmoist, the ghastly havoc scan?
Poor Romanoff! our fellow man!
His pride disdained the equal plan,
His power o'erleaped it.
How grimly shows this gruesome deed!
And yet his sires had sown the seed,
His own hand bade the harvest speed;
It ripened where his victims bleed,
And he has reaped it!

Say, shall the muse of history crown
The banded patriots with renown
Who struck imperial Julius down?
And shall she wear the censor's frown
When desperation,—
Long gagged because of groans and cries—
Reveals to startled earth and skies
What cunning art of warfare lies
Within its reach? One murderer dies
To save the nation

Will any plead that this was he
Who bade the cowering serfs go free?
Alas! there lurked in that decree
A deeper gulf of misery
For them to plunge in.
The lordlings, grown too great and rich,
Their human cattle must unhitch,
While many an Ivan Loukovitch,
Deluded, leaped from out a ditch
Into a dungeon.

Digitized by Google

His hoof had crushed in embryon
Full many a Sclavic Washington
Who might have showed the glorious sun
To caverned wretches, washed and won
From stripes and slavery.
But no—broad Russia had but room
For power's proud seat and freedom's tomb,
While only glistened through the gloom
The headsman's ax, that brought swift doom
On deeds of bravery.

Late had that man of awe
Spoke—and his word was law :—
"Every free breath they draw
Now must be baffled.
Take the seditious lot,
Here in this hour and spot
Let all the heads that plot
Roll on the scaffold.

"As for that traitor chief,
That bloody Solovieff,
Not to a pang so brief
Treason has led him ;
These are my strict commands :
Load him with iron bands,
Lop off his feet and hands
Ere you behead him !"

Digitized by Google

The wheel of fate, sublimely vast,
Has come full circle, sure and fast;
The myth of right divine is past.
The right of man rolls up at last
And men embrace it.
Now tremble, ye tyrannic school;
The rod of iron wherewith ye rule
Is potter's clay. Go drop the tool
Down through the black Tartarean pool
Where none can trace it!

GIORDANO BRUNO.

[Giordano Bruno was a Dominican friar in the latter part of the sixteenth century. He was far in advance of his age, both in intellect and moral courage. His discoveries in the natural sciences were considerable; among other things, he announced his belief that the fixed stars were suns. He was persecuted and imprisoned for heresy, and finally burned at Rome, Feb. 16, 1600. His statue was unveiled in that city in June, 1888, in the presence of 30,000 people, including students, authors and scientists from every country in Europe.]

At night Giordano Bruno stands
With lifted brow and folded hands,
While though his mental vision runs
The radiance of a million suns.

Above his head the skies unroll
Their vast illuminated scroll,
Which fills him with a deeper awe
Than all the prophets and the law.

Digitized by Google

The vesper song is hushed; he hears
The music of the marching spheres;
His thoughts have burst tradition's bars,
He drops the beads to count the stars.

This hour, all Europe's vacant stare
Is sealed in sleep or shut in prayer,
But Bruno's penetrating eyes
Have caught the gleam that never dies.

From bright infinitude he reads
The secret of the atomic seeds—
Eternity of star-mist whirled
Self-operant to mould a world.

The universe, without a flaw,
Moves to its own inherent law;
The clod beneath his feet is rife
With all the pledge and power of life.

And though the intellectual sleep
With faith for nurse is long and deep,
His bold words break the central dream—
That baseless, vague creative scheme.

And then through foreign lands to range
A friendless exile, and to change
The blue dome with its myriad lamps
For noisome dens and prison-damps!

Digitized by Google

How firm Giordano Bruno stands
How free, although with fettered hands!
His doom is fixed. The heaven he paints.
Outrages all the ruling saints.

All champions of the sacred cause,
No heathen such as Pilate was;
In all that council there is none
To ask, What evil hath he done?

They only know him too remote
From what the holy fathers wrote;
"Damnation to the men who teach
Of worlds beyond salvation's reach!"

The Nubian cave, the Indian fen
Are safer than the haunts of men,
Who make their meek phylacteries broad
And judge and punish for their god.

How calm Giordano Bruno stands,
Breast-deep amid the hissing bands!
How fiercely, through the stifling reek,
Those tongues of fire have leave to speak!

Roll sky-ward, crimson-bordered cloud;
Skulk home, hyena-hearted crowd;
Bequeath your sons that deed of shame,
And give to dogs that noble name!

Digitized by Google

The student's daring voice is hushed,
But lo! night's drooping front is flushed
With hues that indicate the morn—
With pangs whereof the truth is born.

How proud Giordano Bruno stands
Where science leadeth foreign lands,
The while her martyr's fiery robe
Sheds purest lustre round the globe!

Within the safeguards of her reign,
The fearless heart, the tireless brain,
She gathers from those ample fields
The golden harvests nature yields.

Here, where the shameful stake once stood,
The brave, the gifted and the good,
In grateful admiration gaze
While art its noblest homage pays.

With one accord, the nations each
Enfranchised both in soul and speech,
By tongues of fire no longer crossed,
Bespeak the better Pentecost.

Digitized by Google

TO THE SERVIANS.

SHALL not the sacked city's loud wailing awaken
Some spirit of fire out of lethargy's gloom?
Has glory your mountains forever forsaken?
You'll find her at least in the patriot's tomb.

Do you feel not, beholding that perishless charter
Which guided the souls and the swords of the brave,
That death is the triumph of liberty's martyr,
And life is the torture of tyranny's slave?

Who raise not the warning but counsel forbearance,
Thus either their tresaon or cowardice show;
Be last to rely upon slow interference,
Be first in the dash at the throat of your foe.

No longer your councils should listen and tremble;
No longer your sabres should blush with their rust;
The standard unfurl—for the conflict assemble,
Your purpose is sacred and heaven is just!

Digitized by Google

FREEDOM.

RECANTATORY TO TENNYSON.

O THOU who early spurned'st the thrall
Of many an earthy Asian god,
Where men were trained to crouch and crawl
Obedient to the awful nod.

All glory to thy puissant arm,
That drives from every land and shrine
The holy sorcerer's muttered charm,
The armored lie of right divine.

O tender-spirited but pulsed
Like sovereign nature everywhere,
At times convulsing and convulsed
To purify the grosser air.

Not lovelier where the Ægean wave
Soft rippled to the silvern strand
Than where eight months of winter rave
Around self-governed Newfoundland!

Thine eyes outshine the costly things
That spangle long-descended crowns,
To which a barbarous odor clings
Of ravaged fields and pillaged towns.

Digitized by Google

Thy virgin soul that could resist
A million mercenary swords
Can dissipate, like morning mist,
A far too ancient house of lords.

The furious fault was never thine
When democratic wrath unpent,
In blotting some heraldic line,
Has rashly marred thy just intent.

But thou dost accurately gauge
The bitter sum of blood and tears,
Not flooded in one hour of rage
But filtered through a thousand years.

And when Harmodius* drew the blade
Of vengeance from its leafy sheath,
Thy touch that sprig of myrtle made
More lasting than our laureate's wreath.

And thou wert present to direct
When, after Brutus bent the knee
And raised his voice without effect,
Stern Casca,† cried, "Speak, hands, for me!"

* A Greek who slew one of the most powerful tyrants of Athens, whose presence he gained carrying a sword hidden in a wreath of myrtle.

† Among those who stabbed Cæsar, Casca was the first to strike, uttering the words quoted above.

Digitized by Google

Say, which has aided most thy reign,
The solemn council or the crowd?
By that the faithless Charles was slain—
By this the brainless James was cowed.*

All brows are "furnished" that unite†
Their own from feudal force to wring;
Thou grantest none the patent right
To legislate or even sing.

The truest harmony is that
Which wakening nations hear thee speak:
A summons to the autocrat,
An invitation to the weak.

The rights the famished Chartists claimed,
At first forbidden and abhorred,
But now in firm enactments framed,
Shall long survive the latest lord.

For thou, whose footsteps near and far
And fast, all human wrongs disclose,
Shalt turn the tinsel human star
Back to the darkness whence it rose

* Charles I and James II of England. The mob was more lenient than the high court of justice.

† The laureate closes his ode to Freedom with this compliment to the reformers:

"Men loud against all forms of power,
Unfurnished brows, tempestuous tongues,
Expecting all things in an hour—
Brass mouths and iron lungs!"

Digitized by Google

FOLK-SONG.

A voice in the wilderness sings ;
The spirit of freedom awakes,
And the peasant stands up before kings
Who are playing their very last stakes.

How firmly his manhood aspires !
If his words have a menacing sound,
'Tis the down-trodden blood of his sires
That is crying through him from the ground !

The weird shapes of fancy diseased,
Are quitting that ghastly control
Which solemnly did as it pleased
With its bond-servants—body and soul.

The brazen-browed legate of wrong,
His turn has now come to grow pale,
For the keen shafts of speech and of song
Fly straight to the joints of his mail.

The red star that carnage portends
Must soon from the firmament fall,
While hope to the zenith ascends
To shed its mild beams over all.

Faith finds a more fitting repose
In the human and not the divine,
While charity lovelier glows
Where the ashes lie cold on the shrine.

Digitized by Google

A halo this world never saw
Shall yet gild the forehead of time
To abolish the barbarous law
As well as the barbarous crime.

NEW YEAR'S ODE.

Now glides the angel Hope abreast
Of day's bright courier speeding west
Around the earth.
The stirring message that he brings
Through every glittering zone he flings—
A new year's birth!

Melts to a point within the past
The finished circle. On the vast
Unsounded deep
That spreads before, the wand of dawn
A segment of the next has drawn
With measured sweep.

Howe'er the mystic round shall fill,
May growing good o'er waning ill
Throughout prevail.
Pandora, close the casket's lid.
With open heart and hand we bid
The new year hail.

Digitized by Google

The anthem that the swelling breeze
Strikes from the ocean's thunderous keys
Floats forth sublime,
Saluting countries far apart
And rousing many a languid heart
To fuller time.

What aspects strange of storm and calm
From crystal peak to crested palm
Now open wide,
Where ebbs and flows, with murmuring surge,
Mingling the dance-song with the dirge,
The human tide!

The fragile foam-bells gleam and pass
Reflecting in their magic glass
All transient things—
The mustering cloud, the crumbling cliff,
The wandering wave, the fleeting skiff,
The flitting wings.

O mimic worlds in miniature!
How brief a season ye endure,
Or weak or strong!
The rushing floods efface and hush
The glories of the painted brush,
The poet's song.

Then, is there no perrennial wreath
For earnest striving? Yes, beneath
The reign of peace,
Shall science, freedom, brotherhood,
The true, the beautiful, the good,
Live and increase.

Digitized by Google

At this momentous stage we pause
To greet the light that never was
On land or sea.
The future thrills us with a voice
To which we listen and rejoice—
It soon shall be.

Not vainly stood the sage to mark
What signals should illume the dark
From midnight towers.
What though he saw no daybeams rise,
The steady starlight of his eyes
Has beaconed ours.

Nor will we rest till craven fear
Be banished from the gladdened sphere—
Till nature work
Her loveliest patterns on that sense
Which long was dimmed by shadows dense
Where demons lurk.

Oh that the budding days might fill
With good alone; no blighting chill,
No serpent's trail
In any bower or bosom hid!—
With hope and faith renewed, we bid
The new year hail.

Digitized by Google

TO A KINDLY CATECHIST.

I FULLY and firmly believe that you write
In the spirit of Christian kindness,
But one who is walking by faith, not sight,
Should scarcely accuse me of blindness.

I can still stand erect without feeling the need
Of the trammels my mind has broke loose from;
And if ever I long for a genuine creed,
There are ninety-nine thousand to choose from.

I believe that a man who makes mammon his friend
Is sure of a good situation.
Though he fail fifty times, he turns up, in the end,
Inside of a fine habitation.

I believe if the faithful keep kicking my shins,
I must pardon them seventy times seven;
If not, I might suddenly die in my sins
And not meet the dear brethren in heaven!

I believe in the family circle—in wife
And child—I believe we should rate them
Above all the treasures we own in this life;
I believe it is wicked to *hate* them.

Digitized by Google

So then, I possess a most positive creed
One nicely adapted for giving
Some part of the godly contentment I need
When rancor denies me a living.

And, not being a Turk, I can bear near the throne
As many as prove themselves brothers;
But I have too much conscience just now of my own
To be ruled by the conscience of others.

Not far can the voice of my heresy reach,
Hemmed in like the hero Gordon,
On the west by the billows of Pubnico beach—
On the east by the swellings of Jordan.

While others, warmed up by the orthodox fires,
And by hatred's sharp winter unbitten,
Possess the whole land, from the Island of Briars
To our Ultima Thule—Cape Breton.

You say that my doctrine with men might prevail
Had it future rewards to beguile 'em.
Dear soul, I am striving to pull down a jail,
And not to erect an asylum!

Digitized by Google

TO HON. W. S. FIELDING.

PREMIER OF NOVA SCOTIA.

FIELDING, a grateful land has viewed
A chief with patriot zeal imbued
Place public good o'er party feud,
Till head and shoulders,
He towers above the multitude
Of office-holders.

Not with the politician's tact
Of specious word and spurious act,
But with fidelity and fact
Uniting all,
The honest leader builds compact
The Spartan wall.

When rights that chartered states endow
Are used to deck some barren brow,
There falls the mantle of a Howe,
Who fought to gain them,
On one who not less nobly now
Dares to maintain them.

Our country needs such men to save
Her honor from an early grave,
Her substance from some grasping knave—
Some Jacob dressing
In pilfered furs*, that he may crave
Her blindfold blessing.

* The allusion here is not to Bremner's furs, but to the kidskins by means of which the purblind patriarch was shamefully deceived.—See Genesis xxvii, 16-22.

Digitized by Google

Yours be the mission to impeach
And interdict the clinging leach.
Though sight and touch should fail to teach
What he has cost her,
She'll know the difference in the speech
And spurn the impostor.

TO OLIVE SCHREINER, CAPETOWN, AFRICA.

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF AN AFRICAN FARM.

CAPE Sable joins hands with the Cape of Hope,
Though ocean, desert and the torrid line
All interpose ; they shall no more confine
Eternal thought, free-winged for boundless scope.

But first, like Waldo, it must cry and grope.
That period is past with yours and mine ;
For they have found, before their day's decline,
The white plume wafted from the azure cope.

But there was darkness over all our land ;
We felt the triple agony that rent
The inner sanctuary's veil in twain :

The world still rolls in dim and dizzy pain—
Make then yon kopje* and this ridge of sand
An Olivet for each dark continent.

* Kopje, a little hill, a name used on the Karroo, in South Africa.

Digitized by Google

TO A FRIEND.

ON HIS REQUEST THAT I SHOULD WRITE A SATIRE.

No, though the manners of our time
Fester for lack of caustic rhyme—
That old heroic operation
Which often saved a gangrened nation,
Even when the torpor overcame
All but a lingering sense of shame—
I have no numbers at command
To stay corruption's master-hand.

My youthful zeal begins to tire.
Alas! the former Magian fire
Of wrath and love, of scorn and pride
Has into dust and ashes died!
'Twould take, indeed, a giant wrong
To challenge one satiric song.

Let factious pens distil their gall,
Let slanderer blab and bigot bawl,
Let dire anathemas be hurled
In some poor hierarch's pigmy world,—
Beyond the curtain and the pall
I've seen the nothingness of all!
Though conscious of the fact, alas!
That vice pervades the general mass,
That theft pervails in every rank
And honesty alone is lank,

Digitized by Google

I view with quite indifferent gaze
The acts and scenes of all their plays
Tragic or comic, which, when through,
The gods forgive—I'm sure I do!

My vanity it would not please,
Though I, encased in affluent ease,
Should reign as goodly and as great
Among the thriving third estate
As Ward McAllister, who rules
The upper world of Gotham fools!

THE NEW DRAMA.

THE stage that we tread is not doomed to destruction
If tyrants and terrors are rendered less strong.
All progress has been but the steady reduction
Of sanctified fraud and of legalised wrong.

Ring down on the drama of priests and apostles
That had such a run on antiquity's stage.
In the daylight of reason they shine but as fossils
Set fast in the petrified soul of their age!

Ring down on the third act of wealth and of labor,
A tragedy mixed with a heavy burlesque,
Where a man so complacently sits on his neighbor
In seating himself at a millionaire's desk.

The footlights are glowing; then ring up the curtain;
The orchestra brays not with trumpet or drum.
The actors are born to their parts, and are certain
Of brilliant successes for ages to come!

Digitized by Google

AD POPULUM.

Heu pietas, heu prisca fides!

THIS age has cast behind its back
The gibbet, thumbscrew, stake and rack.
We worship now the well-paid hack
And not the martyr.
Still, some important things we lack
To freedom's charter.

The masses must in freedom dwell;
Let them be free to buy and sell,
To send a deputy to tell
Their wishes out,
And send the other man to—well,
The right about!

The legislature must desist
From pampering the monopolist,
That government may get more grist
Brought to its mill,
And plunge its own nefarious fist
Deep in the till.

Let no one lull your wits to sleep
Or tempt you with the glittering heap;
For oh! he buys your manhood cheap
Although he offers
All that a spendthrift land can keep
Within its coffers!

Digitized by Google

When factions for their favorites fight,
While honor's cause is lost from sight,
While round you storms of party spite
Rave, roar and hiss,
Then fling your banners to the light
Inscribed like this:

King, congress, council, cabinet
Are for the people's welfare set.
Their tenure is the trust you let,
And not their dower;
Then, never let those men forget
You are the power.

STANZAS TO MARY.

AIR.—Einsam bin ich, nicht alleine.

I AM not alone, though lonely,
For there rises on my view
Thy dear form, the first and only
Treasure that my life e'er knew.

When upon the past I ponder,
When I think on days to be,
Fated far from thee to wander,
Still my heart abides with thee.

Cruel time my hopes has shaken
Like the autumn leaves that fall,
But the spring-time joys awaken
When thy kindness I recall.

Digitized by Google

Though no more the notes of gladness
Speak the lover's heavenly flame,
Yet I hush the voice of sadness
With the music of thy name.

Every load of care I lighten,
Every grief I can beguile,
Every shadow I can brighten
With the mem'ry of thy smile.

Beaming through the darkened distance,
Like the orb that lights the pole,
Still the lode-star of existence
Cheers and guides my erring soul.

THE MINSTREL'S GOOD NIGHT.

Ich singe wie der Vogel singt
Der in den Zweigen wohnet.—*Goethe.*

Good night to all. The shadows o'er the lea
Are stretched like fallen turrets, gray and long;
A lambent gleam still trembles on the sea
That haunts me with an overpowering song
Deeper than music of the gay-plumed throng,
To which I listened by the morning's gate
And tried to give response. If that was wrong,
Here only for your pardon do I wait
Ere I retire alone, but not all desolate.

Affection for my country and my kind,
Unnoticed though it be, encheers me still;
And I have striven with an eager mind
The promise of my childhood to fulfil.

Digitized by Google

But as steep rocks may turn aside the rill
And waste its virtue in the arid sand,
So sternest hindrances beset my will,
And most it grieves me that my native land
Reaps nothing from my thought, and little by my hand.

To sing her praises was the wish I nursed,
The highest boon, I deemed, that man could ask,
While fancy with the future age conversed,
And heard its voice enjoin the glorious task.
How little cared I then who sought to bask
In fortune's sunshine, rusting at his ease,
Or who put on dissimulation's mask
That trivial power he might the better seize ;—
Thank God, I have no place among such men as these !

'Twas well that, in a lot so lowly cast,
The native impulse was too strong and warm,
To be out-voiced by every savage blast,
Or deadened into coldness by the storm,
Or warped by tyrant custom to conform
To modes that set their deep-indented stamp
On everything pertaining to the swarm,
And all the nobler powers so straitly cramp
That palsied reason scarce can trim her flickering lamp.

Nor could the unquiet mind forever keep
Within their narrow intellectual girth,
Whose tricks might sometimes make the angels weep,
And sometimes move a Benedictine's mirth !
A wider heritage was mine by birth :

Digitized by Google

I proudly call the English tongue my own,
And even to this noteless spot of earth,
Like richly-freighted ships from every zone,
It brings the rarest gems the world has ever known.

And sweet is the reward of moments spent
In meditating rural loves and joys;
For this, the courtly Roman was content
To string his polished lyre for girls and boys.
To one who thus his guileless thought employs
Are shown the treasures of the richest theme;
If graven images and gilded toys
Are things he cannot worship or esteem,
His love is not confined to creatures of a dream!

This harp, to every various feeling true,
Has often in some lone, obscure retreat,
Been wet with tears, but tears are heavenly dew,
Benignant showers for ardent bosoms meet;
Else would the young affections, opening sweet,
With dust of daily life become impure;
Or passion's rays would kiss them into heat,
Then, like unsheltered flowers, they would be sure
To wither ere their prime, to die and not mature.

All earth is tuneful, when the infant leaves
First whisper to the idle breeze's play,
Yet scarce less joyous when her lap receives
The golden tribute of an autumn day.
The highest instinct that our lives obey
Points forward—never to a darkened close;
Nor would it help us on the destined way,
If, in the soft allurement of repose
The desert that we tread should blossom like the rose.

Digitized by Google

Henceforward I must linger not nor pause,
As I have done amid the dubious waste,
In futile questioning of all that was,
Or is, or shall be; nor with too much haste
Explore what little yet remains untraced,
Which would avail me nothing to foreknow.
Enough for me, at intervals, to taste
The hidden springs, and own its quickening flow
Replenished from the cloud that seemed surcharged with woe.

Thus in no dreary mood I bid good night.
A liberal patroness has nature been
In furnishing, if only for delight,
The sources whence some scanty truths I glean;
Not in the halls where learnèd men convene,
But by the wave and in the cloistered wood,
Where, muffled in their cloaks of sombre green,
Are ranked the aged trees—the brotherhood
On whom the Holiest looked and saw that it was good.

I still the chords, and on the Acadian birch
Suspend my harp. Perchance the airy note
Of some kind cherub on his earthly search
Shall make diviner spell around it float;
If this should be, the day is not remote
When I shall take it from its silent rest
And all its powers with steadier touch devote
To the prime motive of the patriot's breast
And its achievements high, by which the race is blest.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

This book should be returned t
the Library on or before the last dat
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

Digitized by Google

Carols of the coast :
Widener Library 006172403
3 2044 081 344 624

Digitized by Google